

BRENTNALL STREET WESLEYAN
SUNDAY SCHOOL

WILLIAM SWINDELLS

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**History of Brentnall Street
Wesleyan Sunday School**



MR. SAMUEL RIGBY

Brentnall Street
Wesleyan Sunday School,
Stockport

A HISTORY

BY
WILLIAM SWINDELLS

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— To —

Samuel Rigby, Esq., J. P.

(OF HARROGATE)

Formerly Superintendent of

Brentnall Street Sunday School, Stockport,

to whom the writer is indebted for many
kindnesses,

This work is respectfully dedicated.

PREFACE.

AROUND every Church and Sunday School there gathers a fund of memories, which grows more precious as the years follow one another. Some memories, it may be, are sad, others are full of gladness ; but all are treasured because of their effect upon human lives. In quiet moments one may almost hear the once-familiar voice of teacher or superintendent ; and memory paints the picture of a classroom in the school of our childhood, with the teacher standing before the children. The old lessons are re-told, the old appeal is again heard, and the love and self-denying labours of a former teacher are better appreciated, because with increasing age has come additional understanding.

This book owes its inception to a desire to have a permanent record of some who have helped to build up Brentnall Street School. It has always seemed a pity that the record of work done in the School by former teachers was in danger of being lost. With the publication of this work that contingency is lessened, although it must be confessed that, owing to lack of space, much interesting matter has been excluded.

I am deeply indebted to all who have assisted in any way to complete this work. Many have lent papers, books, and deeds which have been of great service. I am under an obligation to Mr. W. B. Leigh, the secretary of Stockport Sunday School, for permission to examine some of the early minute-books of that institution. The information thus obtained has been of great service in writing the section dealing with the part taken by Methodists in the Wesley Street School. Mr. Edwin Ward and Mrs. Arthur King have also lent

early reports of the Stockport Sunday School. Mr. John Smith, of Higher Hillgate Mill, gave permission to examine the trust deeds of old Brentnall Street School, which now forms part of his firm's works. Mr. John Lingard has assisted in preparing the photographs, and has thus added interest to the book.

It has not been found possible to incorporate a history of Brentnall Street Day School within the scope of this work. The great work of the former headmaster and mistress, Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Johnstone, and their successors, Mr. J. W. Walgate and Miss Staveacre, is deserving of a separate volume.

May the blessing of Almighty God rest upon this memorial, and may the reading of it induce some of the younger members of the present generation to devote themselves to the work of Sabbath School teaching!

W. SWINDELLS.

19, Buxton Road, Stockport.



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History of Brentnall Street Wesleyan Sunday Schools

CHAPTER I.

IN the year 1781 Robert Raikes, a newspaper owner, of the city of Gloucester, began a movement which was destined to affect not merely the city in which he lived, but the whole of England, and, by-and-bye, the world. Going one morning to the suburbs of Gloucester to hire a gardener, he was distressed by the depravity exhibited by the children who came under his notice. He was told by a woman that if he could see the children on Sunday he "would be shocked indeed; for then the street is filled with multitudes of these wretches, who, released on that day from employment, spend their time in noise and riot, playing chuck, and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell rather than any other place." The effect of this conversation upon Raikes led him to consider what steps might be adopted to bring an end to such a dreadful state of affairs.

"The particular mode adopted by Mr. Raikes to accomplish his object was as follows: Having found four persons who had been accustomed to instruct children in reading, he engaged to pay them one shilling each for receiving and instructing such children as he should send to them every Sunday. The children were to come soon after ten in the morning, and stay till twelve; they were then to go home and return at one; and, after reading a lesson, were to be conducted to church. After church, they were to be employed in repeating the catechism till

half-past five, and then to be dismissed, with an injunction to go home quietly, and by no means to make a noise in the street."¹

This marked the beginning of the Sunday school movement as we know it to-day. It is true that Raikes was not the first to establish Sunday schools. There had been other attempts, more or less successful, both in this country and on the Continent—notably at Milan—but these had been confined in their operations to the town or neighbourhood where they had their birth. One such was conducted by Miss Hannah Ball, a Methodist, at High Wycombe. When Raikes found that his scheme met with success, he had the good sense to insert a notice in his newspaper, the *Gloucester Journal*, and a knowledge of the work done among the poor children of Gloucester was thus disseminated. Paragraphs from Raikes's publication were copied by other newspapers, and especially by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the idea of Sunday schools gradually spread throughout the country.

Stockport joined in the movement in the year 1784. This year also marked the beginning of Sunday schools in neighbouring towns. A meeting was held in the vestry of St. Mary's Parish Church, at which the Rector of Stockport (the Rev. Charles Prescott) presided. The meeting decided to form an interdenominational committee, and inaugurate Sunday schools in the town. The rules and orders were published on November 11, 1784, and the intentions of the Committee were set out in the following form:—

The town should be divided into six parts; that there should be at least one school in each part; that two subscribers should visit each school, and report to the Committee; that the scholars should attend from nine to twelve in the forenoon, and from one to the hour of worship in the afternoon, when their teachers should conduct them to Church or Chapel, and then return to school again until six o'clock; the teachers to be paid one shilling and sixpence per day; and that the children of Protestant Dissenters should, if possible, have masters of their own persuasion, and "choose their own mode of catechising."²

¹ W. H. Watson : *First Fifty Years of the Sunday School*, p. 19.

² W. I. Wild : *History of Stockport Sunday School*, p. 3.

The scheme was adopted, and the following schools were established:—

Town's School, Grammar School;
Park, Boys' School;
Hillgate Meeting House School;
Chestergate Boys' School;
Ardern Pool School;
Daw Bank School;
Mr. Hardy's School, Higher Hillgate;
Rowcroft Smithy School.¹

The schools were under a Committee and visitors, composed of fifty-two of the most influential gentlemen of Stockport. The Committee met quarterly at the Parish Church. The Rector of Stockport was the treasurer, a Unitarian the secretary, and a Wesleyan Methodist the librarian. It was decided to take collections at the various Churches and Chapels in the town for the support of these schools. There were then only five places of worship in Stockport, viz.:—The Parish Church, St. Peter's, Hillgate Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, the Old Chapel (the Tabernacle), and the New Chapel (Orchard Street). The Report for the first year's work of the schools shows the gross income to have been £176 15s. 2d., and the payments of salaries to teachers £87 9s. 0d.²

The mention of the Hillgate Meeting House School brings to notice the important part Methodists played in establishing Sunday schools in Stockport. Dr. Heginbotham says that Methodism was introduced to the town by John Bennett, of Chinley, one of Wesley's earliest and most zealous helpers. At the request of Bennett, Mr. Wesley visited Stockport, and records the fact in his *Journal*:—"April 28, 1745. At nine I preached near Stockport to a large congregation." The second visit of Mr. Wesley seems to have been in 1759. Soon after this visit several wealthy people joined the Society, and it was

¹Heginbotham: *Stockport Ancient and Modern*, Vol. I., p. 385.

²Heginbotham: *Stockport Ancient and Modern*, Vol. I., p. 349.

decided to erect a place of worship in Hillgate. This Chapel was opened by the Rev. William Grimshaw, Vicar of Haworth, a great friend of Wesley. It is said that the pulpit, which formerly belonged to a Church of the Establishment, was *carried* from Altrincham by James Chadwick. Methodism continued to grow, and with the growth the humble little Meeting House, without gallery or pews, failed to provide sufficient accommodation for the people who wished to attend the ministry of Wesley's helpers. Accordingly, in 1784, the little building was pulled down, and Hillgate Chapel was erected on the same site, and partly with the same materials. Speaking at the foundation stone-laying of Brunswick Chapel, Portwood, in May, 1848, Mr. James Heald, at that time one of the most prominent laymen in Methodism, said that the land for the first Hillgate Meeting House was purchased by Matthew Mayer and William Hamilton. This information he had obtained from a consultation of the original trust deed. The trust deed for the new Chapel was executed on May 19, 1784, and the following were the first trustees:—

MATTHEW MAYER, late of Portwood, but now of Stockport, yeoman.

WILLIAM LAVENDER, the elder, of Stockport, linen draper.

GEORGE GARSIDE, of Stockport, yeoman.

JOHN WHITTAKER, of the same place, check manufacturer.

JOSEPH HEAWORD, cotton manufacturer.

JEREMIAH BURY, check manufacturer.

WILLIAM STAFFORD, yeoman.

SAMUEL GORDON, tailor.

HENRY HARROP, cotton manufacturer.

JOSEPH LOWE, grocer.

JOHN COLLIER, cotton manufacturer.

WILLIAM LAVENDER, the younger, linen draper.

Two years after the building of Hillgate Chapel, Stockport was separated from the historic Oldham Street Circuit, of which up to that time it had formed a part,

and was now made the head of a Circuit, with 880 members of Society. The first ministers appointed were the Rev. Robert Roberts and the Rev. Duncan Kay.

The Methodists of Stockport entered heartily into the new Sunday school movement. In the street called Wesley Street, adjoining the old Hillgate Chapel, are several houses, approached by long flights of steps. These were the home of the Meeting House School. Associated in the management of the school were fifteen officers, and of this number ten were trustees of the Methodist Chapel. That fact is stated to be one of the reasons why this particular school was, from its establishment, designated by the name attached to the chapel. Chief among the trustees of the chapel and one of the most active promoters of the school was Mr. Matthew Mayer, who at that time, or later, owned the houses in which the school was held. A brief sketch of the career of Mr. Mayer will furnish a partial explanation of the great success which attended the Meeting House School, and will probably lead the reader to conclude that the school was fortunate in possessing men of exceptional ability on its Management Committee.

Mr. Matthew Mayer was born at Portwood Hall on November 4, 1740. His father was a farmer, and a tenant on the Portwood estate for fifty years. The parents were attendants at Stockport Parish Church, and the family were regularly taken thither.

"About 1759 Mr. John Wesley came to Manchester, and Mr. Mayer was invited by some friends to go to hear him preach. He did so, and was wonderfully pleased with the kindness and affection among the early friends of Methodism, who came from different parts on this occasion. He concluded that they must be Christians, from the love that they showed to each other, and could not forbear wishing himself like them. He soon afterwards joined the small Society in Stockport, of which he made the ninth member."¹

¹*Methodist Magazine*, 1816.

Mr. Matthew Mayer received the great joy of pardon of his sins in Stockport Parish Church, and the record of the great change, which Methodists call "conversion," may be read in his own words. He says: "I regularly attended the Sacrament at the old Church, and these were softening, humbling, and refreshing times to me; but on that memorable day, the first of August, 1762, being in deep distress, I poured out my heart unto the Lord in fervent prayer, saying, 'Lord, if I perish, it shall be at Thy feet; if I am condemned, it shall be for believing.' Then I went to the table, believing and relying on the merits of Jesus, and pleading His death and suffering; yet I returned from the table in deep distress, and continued praying for a sense of pardon until the service was ended, when the Lord, in a moment, removed all my burden and distress, and filled my soul with love, joy, and praise. The change was so great it was visible in my countenance, so that my friends observed that my sorrow was turned to joy."

In conjunction with a friend from Manchester, Mr. Mayer established weekly prayer-meetings in the district. It is said that these meetings were the first public prayer-meetings in Methodism. When a number of people had formed the habit of attending, Mr. Mayer addressed them on the things of God, and thus began his wonderful career as a preacher of the Gospel.

In the month of June, 1763, Mr. Wesley paid his first visit to Portwood Hall, on his way through Stockport to Birmingham. Henceforward Mr. Mayer's house was Wesley's home whenever he came this way. The young man entertained a profound veneration for Wesley, and the respect was mutual; for Mr. Wesley invited the young preacher to travel with him, and to meet him at different places whenever he could be spared from home. "Mr. Wesley received Mr. Mayer into the Annual Conferences as a confidential friend; and on many occasions consulted him upon the affairs of individuals and Societies in this neighbourhood."

For twenty years Mr. Mayer undertook preaching work, which frequently taxed his strength to the utmost, and the exposure on his journeys brought him to death's door on one or two occasions. He did not confine himself to any regular preaching plan, but considered God had called him to carry the glad tidings of salvation to towns and villages, and then leave the cultivation to other labourers. It is scarcely possible to calculate the amount of work undertaken by this unpaid itinerant preacher. About the time that the Sunday School in Wesley Street was established Mr. Mayer gave up to a large extent the long journeys which necessitated absence from home, and took a local preacher's place in the Stockport Circuit. This change of occupation would give Mr. Mayer plenty of scope for the exercise of his preaching ability on the Sabbath Day, and at the same time allow him to attend to matters at home during the week—a proceeding impossible before. In his biography, published in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1816, it is said: "He supplied Oldham Street Chapel in Manchester one Sunday in every month till within a few years of his death. And perhaps no higher testimony can be given to his character than to state the well-known fact that after preaching there for more than forty years, no preacher had larger congregations than attended when it was his turn to be there."

Mr. Mayer was a man of independence of mind and action. He preached the first Methodist sermon at Worsley, near Manchester, and, when a Society was formed there, became its sole overseer. Later, the members of Society applied to the Superintendent of the Oldham Street Circuit for a supply of preachers to be sent to Worsley. A writer in the *Methodist Recorder* for August 13, 1914, says that the request was granted; but, while Mr. Mayer saw the propriety of the Connexional arrangements which were made, he did not regard them with much favour, and rarely visited Worsley after the arrangements were concluded.

The death of Mr. John Wesley in March, 1791, was the signal for the opening of a prolonged agitation which

threatened the very existence of Methodism. By that time there were what may reasonably be called three parties among the followers of Wesley: (1) Those who considered themselves to be members of the Church of England, and who objected to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper being celebrated in Methodist Chapels or administered by Methodist preachers; (2) those who desired the celebration of the Sacrament, but were not distinctly hostile to the Establishment; (3) those who were frankly "Dissenters." The first note of trouble was sounded by the issue of a circular from eighteen laymen of Hull, who urged that the usefulness of Methodism would be greatly increased by its continued connexion with the Church of England. This circular was followed by other circulars issued from many parts of England, and a very serious division of opinion was revealed, not only between preachers and people, but between the preachers themselves, who took separate sides with the people in the controversy, until the whole Connexion was convulsed. In addition to the difficulty regarding the celebration of the Sacrament, the trustees of many important Chapels put forward claims to take part in the government of the Connexion—claims which had never before been made, and which were not agreed to when they were advanced. The trustees of the Old Room at Bristol claimed the right to appoint the preachers to their Chapel, and expelled the Rev. Henry Moore, because he had assisted in the celebration of the Sacrament against their wishes. "The trustees of Manchester and Stockport published a circular, in which they commended and approved the act of the Bristol trustees in the expulsion of Mr. Moore, and intimated their wish to form a combination of trustees to support them in their struggle."¹

When the Conference assembled in Manchester in 1795, sixty-seven trustees' delegates met to consider recommendations which would tend to the pacification of the disturbed Connexion. Even among the trustees there

¹Dr. Smith : *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, Vol. II., p. 116

was an entire lack of unanimity, and separate meetings had to be held. Of those trustees who sided with the Bristol trustees, who at that time were called "High Church Tories, and were most anxious to urge the Conference to enforce an Act of Uniformity, by which the Societies might be brought back to the usages of Wesley's days, or to what they called the original plan of Methodism," Mr. Matthew Mayer was appointed chairman, an indication of his standing in the Connexion. Two years later the trustees met when the Conference assembled at Leeds. Mr. Mayer was again the chairman, and Mr. George Garside, of Stockport, represented the trustees of Hillgate Chapel. At this Conference the wishes of the trustees were met, and the laymen became united with the preachers in spirit and aim. While the foregoing events have, apparently, no particular reference to the Sunday school movement in Stockport, they are introduced to show the position of Mr. Matthew Mayer, his independence of mind, and his willingness to take strong action in pursuit of what he conceived to be his duty.

The schools under the control of the General Committee of the town seem to have been continued under that plan of management for about ten years. The chief item of expenditure each year was the salary of teachers. At least half the income was expended in this way. The sum received for the upkeep of the joint Schools from July, 1792, to July, 1793, amounted to £187. Of this, £40 was received from a collection in Hillgate Chapel, £12 from a collection in St. Peter's Church, £11 19s. from Orchard Street Chapel, and the remainder from smaller contributions. The number of scholars in all the Schools in the year 1793 was 1,148. The wages of teachers swallowed up £89 16s. 3d.—a very serious item.

In 1790 an event occurred which, probably without design, altered the whole character of Sunday school work in Stockport, and incidentally was the means of advancing one of the joint schools far ahead of all the rest. In the year mentioned Mr. Joseph Mayer, son of Mr. Matthew Mayer, joined the Meeting House School, or, as it was

then styled, the Methodist Sunday School, and he was destined to be the last survivor of the original band of workers. Fifty years later, when he had completed his jubilee as a Sunday school worker, his fellow-officers and teachers presented him with a token of their regard, and in the course of his reply he said:—

It was in January, 1790, that I was first called into this School, and I can with pleasure refer back (although it may appear trifling) for the purpose of referring to a single incident connected with that time, which I will relate to you, because very often, as you will find, apparent trifles lead to great results, and I am willing to believe that they were very providential reasons which called me here. At that time this School was one of six which had been opened in different parts of the town, under the government of one General Committee; for the system was established and supported by all parties—Churchmen, Wesleyans, and Dissenters of all denominations uniting in the work. . . . The teachers were then paid, as you are aware, and were three in number, and the scholars about one hundred. One of these teachers taught writing; but as he as well as the others were paid, you may easily suppose they were not of the first order, for such would not require pay, *they* would teach without salary. Writing was taught in this School from the first; if it had not, I should probably never have engaged in it. This teacher came to me and asked me if I would be good enough to officiate for him on one of the Sabbath days, as he was bound to find a substitute in his absence, or else there would have been no school. I mentioned the circumstance to my honoured father, who was associated with all good works, and he said “Well, go, Joe, it can do thee no harm, for once.” I went accordingly, and did as well as I could; for, having just come back from boarding school, I could write, though I never could write very well, and I could read my Bible tolerably. I do not know how it was, but several of the scholars, as I was going away from the school in the afternoon, came to me and said, “When will you come again? Will you come teaching next Sunday?” I did not make any promise at the time, but I saw something in them which I thought might be interesting—there was good ground which only wanted working up; and I knew that rough stones are capable of taking a fine polish. However, I did not go without consulting my father, who encouraged me to proceed. Accordingly, I resolved to try what could be done, and I soon perceived there was plenty of room for exertion and abundance of work, but the labourers were too few. I therefore sought about for companions, and the first who joined me was my school-fellow, Mr. Samuel Collier. I next introduced Mr. Alexander Rooth, who was then a new settler in the town. . . . The next who joined us was Mr. Thomas Marsland, your highly respected Member of Parliament. These were some of my first companions, and afterwards others came up to our help.¹

With the introduction of unpaid teachers, the Meeting

¹ Account of Mr. Joseph Mayer's Jubilee, published by James Lomax & Sons, 1840.

House School began to increase at a rapid rate. Indeed, the extract just given furnishes a sufficient explanation of the growth. It will readily be understood that when men of superior education, wealth, and social influence joined the school, the institution was at once placed in a position which it had not previously occupied. The progress caused embarrassment to the Committee, for they knew not where to accommodate all the children who came to be taught. Extra rooms in adjoining buildings had to be rented, instruction books purchased, and the annual working expenses thereby considerably increased. This meant greater demands upon the funds of the General Committee, which the latter were not inclined to grant.¹ This decision of the Committee meant that the work must be retarded, or the visitors would have to undertake the financial responsibility of the Meeting House School upon their own shoulders. The latter alternative was accepted, and in 1794 the School was withdrawn from the control of the Joint Committee, and from that date must be regarded as a separate institution. There was one condition attached to the transfer of authority, and that was, the Joint Committee still claimed to canvass the town for subscriptions for Sunday school purposes. The proceeds of the annual sermon, preached in Hillgate Wesleyan Chapel, were henceforward to be devoted solely to the maintenance of the Meeting House School. In the first Annual Report of 1794 there is the announcement:—

As the Committee have concluded not to interfere with the GENERAL COMMITTEE of the town, by soliciting subscriptions, it is therefore earnestly requested that all who are friends of this School, and who wish to contribute towards the support thereof, will give their contributions at the Annual Sermon for that purpose; or, if more convenient, will send their donation to any of the following persons:—Mr. James Heald, Portwood;

¹Our School flourished beyond the rest. A greater supply of books became requisite, and an increase of rent, with other expenses, occasioned a demand beyond its proportion of the public subscription. The Visitors, having received several checks from the Committee (who perhaps did not advert to the increased number of scholars), offered to support the School themselves; this was accepted, and their proportion for that year paid out of the funds.—*A Report of the Present State of the Stockport Sunday School*, published 1806.

Mr. George Garside, Underbank; Mr. John Collier, Cheapside;
Mr. Matthew Mayer, Cale Green.

The mention of the names of these gentlemen suggests that leading Methodists were not only undertaking the management of the now separated school, but were also shouldering the financial responsibility.

The first report of the school under the separate management is headed, "A Report of the Present State of the Methodist Sunday School in Stockport, October 4, 1794." Mr. Joseph Mayer, in reply to a criticism, said that "the School was called 'The Methodist Sunday School' long before it was separated from the General Committee of the town."¹ It is said that the School was called "Methodist" because "most of its promoters and active supporters were of that denomination."² As was the case in 1784, the list of officers of 1794 contains the names of many trustees of Hillgate Chapel, or men who occupied a position in local Methodism; and most, if not all, were men of financial influence:—

Mr. JAMES HEALD, *Treasurer*,
Mr. GEORGE GARSIDE, *Librarian*,
Mr. ALEXANDER ROTH, *Secretary*.

Committee:

Mr. Matthew Mayer	Mr. James Dodge
„ William Lavender	„ Samuel Dodge
„ George Garside	„ Benjamin Collier
„ James Heald	„ William Lavender, jnr
„ John Collier	„ Randle Allcock
„ Thomas Downham	„ Thomas Brentnall

Visitors:

Mr. George Garside	Mr. Samuel Dodge
„ James Heald	„ Benjamin Collier
„ John Collier	„ Thomas Downham
„ James Dodge	

The publication of this important list brings us to notice the part taken by Methodists generally in the early

W. I. Wild: *History of Stockport Sunday School*, p. 12.

²Stockport Sunday School Report for 1806.

Sunday School movement. No sooner did Mr. Wesley hear of Raikes's plan than he published an account of it in the *Arminian Magazine* for January, 1785, in which the scheme met with his decided approval. He exhorted his Societies to follow the example of the Gloucester printer, and this advice was accepted. Very soon a large number of Methodists had become workers in Sunday schools throughout the land. It appears to have been almost the universal practice to form a committee of gentlemen of all denominations, and then to establish schools open to all who cared to come, irrespective of creed. Collections were made in various churches and chapels, and subscriptions were solicited from those who approved of the objects of the "Charity."

Very early in the history of the movement we find Methodists grouping themselves together in sufficient numbers to establish schools which, like the one at Stockport, bore a denominational name, but which were open to any children who had a desire to be taught. In the early schools there does not seem to have been any wish to attach the scholars to the Society. Writing in 1798, regarding the school at Stockport, Mr. Joseph Mayer says that any attempt on the part of the teachers to make Methodists of the children would be condemned by the Visitors. This attitude was not confined to the Committee of Wesley Street School. Much the same thing was said in 1787 by Richard Rodda, one of Wesley's itinerant preachers, regarding a Sunday school which he had established in Chester—a school which was founded and supported entirely by Methodists.¹

While there were many schools in the country which bore the title "Methodist," mainly for the reason already

¹ The school at Chester altogether originated with the Chester Methodists, though the rules were submitted to the bishop of the diocese, and had his entire approval. "We had no intention," said Richard Rodda, "as some persons represented, to make disciples to Methodism, but to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they might become useful members of civil and religious society." — Tyerman: *Life and Times of John Wesley*. Vol. III., p. 500.

given, they all seem to have had full self-government, the Committees of those institutions not being responsible to anyone save the subscribers who provided their finances. Sunday schools had been established more than twenty years before the Methodist Conference thought fit to pass resolutions regarding the work. Methodist preachers, however, working in their circuits, were not slow to ally themselves with the movement, especially in the way of preaching the "charity sermons." The preachers of the Stockport Circuit, and of the adjoining Oldham Street Circuit, were ready to lend their powerful aid on behalf of the Wesley Street School, and the collection taken at these sermons formed the largest item in the Committee's income. No doubt it was a privilege the preachers greatly appreciated, to be able to help forward a movement which seemed full of wonderful possibilities. In his first notice of Sunday Schools, John Wesley said: "I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries of Christians!"

As early as 1788, four years after the establishment of schools in Stockport, the Rev. William Simpson, a Methodist preacher, delivered a sermon in Hillgate Chapel on the duties of teachers. From 1790 onwards sixteen annual sermons were preached in Hillgate Chapel by Methodist preachers, all of whom were stationed in Stockport or Oldham Street, Manchester (out of which the Stockport Circuit was carved in 1786). The names of the preachers who rendered this service are: Revs. Samuel Bradburn, William Myles, Joseph Benson, Alexander Mather, Edward Jackson, William Jenkins, George Highfield, Theophilus Lessey, Walter Griffith, James Wood, and Jabez Bunting — all men of Connexional renown. Joseph Benson, who came in 1793 (before the school was withdrawn from the control of the General Committee), says that he preached at Stockport for the Methodist Sunday School "at the request of the principal members of the Methodist Society." The collections in

the aggregate for the sixteen years referred to amounted to considerably over £2,000. On other occasions, besides the annual sermon, the preachers were ready to address the scholars.

The trustees of Hillgate Chapel also rendered very effective service to the Committee of the school by placing their building at the disposal of the scholars, not merely for the annual sermon, but throughout the year, when the chapel was not required for the ordinary public worship. One report says that "the school was called the Methodist Sunday School on account of its being taught in the premises belonging to the trustees of the Methodist Chapel." Before the end of the eighteenth century the success of the school was causing embarrassment to the Committee. As the number of scholars increased, cottage after cottage was rented; but even with the increase of rooms and the use of the chapel "it was impossible to find convenient rooms to accommodate the great number of children who assembled on the Sabbath to be taught." In 1799 the rent of the houses was £60—a sum large enough to cause concern; and there were thoughts of erecting a building which would provide the necessary accommodation, with possibly less money to find in the way of rent. At that time the Rev. William Jenkins was stationed as one of the ministers of Hillgate Chapel.¹ Mr. Jenkins drew up a plan for the erection of a new chapel, with school buildings adjoining, but so built that the children could readily pass from one to the other whenever necessary. This idea of grouped buildings for church and Sunday school purposes is considered so modern, that it is worthy of note to find the plan advocated a hundred and twenty years ago. The scheme of Mr. Jenkins, although urged by the Committee, was found impossible of accomplishment; and relief for the great overcrowding of the schoolrooms had to be sought in another direction. It is quite possible

¹ Mr. Jenkins was one of Wesley's preachers, who for twenty years toiled laboriously, doing the work of an architect in many circuits without remuneration.—Nehemiah Curnock: *Hinde Street Chapel*, p. 24.

that the determining factor in the negotiations for the erection of a new chapel and school was the question: When the buildings were erected, who should control the school? Should it continue, as it had been up to then, an independent institution, bearing the name of Methodist, absorbing the time, talents, and energies of Methodists, yet not pledged to pass on its scholars to the Methodist Societies? Should it continue to stand aloof, an institution in itself, with no particular bias towards any branch of the Christian Church? Or, in the event of the new premises being erected, should it come under the control of the denomination which provided the buildings, supplied the preacher, furnished the majority of the workers, and under whose auspices the major portion of the income was raised?

The question of control or management was one which was bound to force itself to the front, for differences of opinion were already manifesting themselves among the Methodist people in Stockport. It cannot be definitely stated when the notion of denominational Sunday schools first became general, but it must not have been long after their introduction in 1784. Dr. Heginbotham says that the Church of England Sunday schools were established in Stockport in 1793; and in 1798, following the secession of a number of Methodists, who eventually became part of the Methodist New Connexion, a Sunday school was begun at old Mount Tabor Chapel, in London Square. In 1802 the managers of the Methodist Sunday schools in London had formed themselves into an association for arranging plans of school management, and had sent circulars to other Methodists in the country advocating their policy. Thus, while the Committee of the Wesley Street School were considering the erection of a new building, there were evidences of the growth of the denominational idea. The following regulation was made by the Conference of 1808:—

Let all the travelling preachers, where Sunday Schools are established, be members of the committees of those schools which belong to us, and let the superintendent preside in their

meetings. And as many of the children as can be accommodated with room ought, invariably, to attend our public worship, at least once on the Lord's Day.

While the foregoing resolution was passed several years after the date under review, it may represent the mind of the Conference and Methodist people for a period long before it was actually placed upon the Minutes of Conference.



CHAPTER II.

WHEN it was found impossible to carry into effect the scheme prepared by Mr. Jenkins, the Committee had to cast about for an alternative plan to accommodate the scholars, whose numbers continued to grow in an almost incredible manner. Mr. Matthew Mayer was foremost in the advocacy of the erection of a new school, and in 1802 it was definitely decided to proceed with this scheme as soon as possible. In the report of 1803 public announcement was made of the decision of the Committee; and the statement was also made that the Committee did not limit their establishment to any party considerations. The foundation-stone was laid on Saturday evening, June 15, 1805, and on that occasion the treasurer of the building committee declared that the building was not to be confined to any sect or party, nor to be under the exclusive direction or influence of any. The Committee "took upon themselves to burst all barriers of name, distinction, or sect, and to combine in the work of true piety and pure charity of the good and pious of all denominations," and to call the new building the Stockport Sunday School. The new school was opened on Sunday, December 21, 1806, the preacher being the Rev. R. Powel, M.A., Rector of Wibsey.

The opening of the new school marked the culmination of a serious division of opinion between the Stockport Methodists. Mr. Matthew Mayer seemed to lean to the idea of a school independent in its management of outside control. In his obituary, published in the *Methodist Magazine*, the writer says: "Stockport Sunday School never had a warmer advocate, for its principles quite accorded with his own views, and with his conduct in his younger days" (possibly referring to his desire to have liberty to preach *anywhere*, instead of being attached as a local preacher to a particular circuit). Several other

leading Methodists agreed with Mr. Mayer, not the least energetic being his son, who lived to be the last survivor of the original band of workers. But it appears that a large body of Methodists were dissatisfied at the turn of events. Whatever connection the school formerly had with Methodism, whether nominal or real, was now severed by the removal of the scholars to the new building. The most notable feature of the transfer was the position of the Methodist preachers. The Rev. Jabez Bunting was the last Methodist to preach the annual sermon. When the new school was opened Methodist preachers excluded themselves from taking appointments. We have to come to quite modern times before a Wesleyan again occupied the pulpit—when the fire of controversy had, happily, long been extinguished, and when even the cause of any difference had become only a memory.

At the opening of the nineteenth century there were probably two prominent causes of a divided opinion among Stockport Methodists regarding Sunday school management, and even these two causes resolved themselves into the question of control. The first disturbing factor was the nature of the anniversary; the second the question of writing on the Sabbath Day. Even before the separation of the Methodist Sunday School from the control of the General Committee the annual sermon had become an important institution. The great financial success of this festival may possibly have led the Committee in 1794 to undertake the management of the school. The first preacher to occupy the pulpit on these special occasions was the Rev. Samuel Bradburn, who was elected President of the Methodist Conference in 1799. The distinguishing feature of these "charity sermons," however, was not the personality of the preacher, powerful as that undoubtedly was, but the elaborate programme of music performed by local musicians, assisted by professional singers and performers on musical instruments, who generally gave their services free on these occasions. In October, 1790, the date of the first annual sermon, the hymn-paper is headed,

"Hymns and an Anthem to be sung by the children of the Methodist Sunday School, in the Methodist Chapel, Hillgate." It is worthy of note that Mr. Joseph Mayer, who became leader of the orchestra, joined the school in January, nine months before. In subsequent years selections were given from oratorios, and many of the tunes were composed by James Leach, of Rochdale, "who had the faults of his time, namely, florid passages, numerous grace notes, and repeating lines." Such music would require trained singers, and the congregation would consequently be unable to personally join in the service of praise. "The chances of hearing good music well rendered were in those days few and far between. Only at long intervals were any concerts held in the town, such as were accessible to the general public. Hence, these annual festivals became so crowded as to necessitate stringent regulations for their control. *The sermon was only a secondary consideration*, compared with the music. The programmes were always headed, "Selections of Music to be performed, when a Sermon will be preached."¹

The extract furnishes one reason why some of the preachers and people were dissatisfied. Musical troubles at this period caused intense strife at Hillgate Chapel, for part held with an elaborate musical service, and others were bitterly opposed to it. The Rev. Richard Watson, who afterwards became such an ornament to Wesleyan Methodism, but who at that time was stationed in Stockport as a New Connexion minister, wrote a very keen satire upon the trouble. The Rev. Edward Hare, a great controversialist and stickler for discipline, was appointed to Stockport as second minister in 1804. He brought himself into serious conflict with some of the leading people at Hillgate by attempting to enforce the regulations of Conference regarding singing and instrumental music. At the Conference of 1800 the following decision had been arrived at:—

Q.—Can anything be done to prevent what appears to us a great evil, namely Bands of Music and Professional Singers

¹ W. I. Wild : *History S.S.S.*, p. 218.

being brought into our Chapels when Charity Sermons are preached?

A.—Let none in our Connexion preach charity sermons where such persons and such music are introduced. And let the Stewards, Trustees, and Leaders be informed that such a practice is offensive to the Conference, who believe it has been hurtful to the minds of many pious people.

Min. Conf., 1800.

Probably this resolution marked the beginning of the strife at the Chapel. The trouble does not seem to have been confined to the "charity sermons," for the musical instruments were employed in "distracting variety" during the ordinary services, and in protesting against this open defiance of the regulations of Conference, and also an infringement of the right of the preacher to choose the hymns which should be sung during the services he conducted, Edward Hare incurred much displeasure. At Hillgate the trustees and their friends proved the more powerful party, and the musical instruments were continued for some time. At the Conference of 1805 still further regulations were formulated regarding the conducting of divine worship, and especially relating to music, and no Methodist preacher could be faithful to Conference and set at nought these regulations. It is very probable that Park Chapel, at the entrance to Portwood, was built in 1807 by Methodists who objected to the musical instruments, and who had been estranged by the disputes at Hillgate. At their second meeting the trustees of Park Chapel passed the following resolution:—

That the singing shall consist of good common congregational tunes—such as are contained in "David's Harp" or Leach's Collection; and that no anthems or pieces of music shall be sung, nor any instrument of music be allowed, except a violoncello.¹

Even the Committee of the Sunday School were not unanimous in arranging the musical festival, for in 1802 we find Mr. John Middleton, one of the managers, protesting against inviting the "musical gentlemen" to take part in the annual sermon music, "because he thinks it inconsistent with Methodism, and is conforming too much to the spirit of the world." The trouble was made more acute by the fact that those who objected to the music

¹ Humphrey Jutsum : *Jubilee Memorial, Tiviot Dale Chapel*, p. 24.

did not possess the power to stop what they considered an impropriety. Even Edward Hare's superintendent was not prepared to put into force the regulations of Conference.

The question of teaching writing on the Lord's Day was another cause of a divided people in Stockport. Dr. Heginbotham says that this was one of the reasons why Wesleyan Methodists established schools of their own in the town. There was a growing objection to teaching the art on the Sabbath Day, which some considered to be desecrated by such a practice, though it must be stated that even the preachers themselves were not unanimous in their objection. Some strenuously opposed the system; others, shrinking from taking a strong line, simply did not bother. The people were also divided. Writing had been taught at Wesley Street School from its establishment. The school was not singular in this respect, however, for in hundreds of similar institutions in different parts of the country the same custom prevailed. In the course of time Methodist preachers inclined to the view that writing was a secular art, and should be taught on week-days only. But a problem arose, when it was attempted to get this view adopted by committees who were independent of Methodist control, and who were also in favour of the system to which objection was made. For instance, the matter caused great uneasiness to the ministers at Sheffield, among whom was the Rev. Jabez Bunting. "Before their [the ministers] appointment to the circuit it had been the practice to teach the art of writing in Sunday schools to which the Methodist name was attached, and which were chiefly supported by Methodist liberality; and when objection was taken, grave questions arose between the active managers of these schools and the authorities of the circuit as to the nature and extent of the control which the latter might rightfully claim over the former."¹ The controversy in the Yorkshire town was looked upon as one raising wider issues than the objecting to writing on the Sabbath Day.

¹ *Life of Jabez Bunting*, p. 294.

The question was asked, "Are institutions which avowedly aim at the very same objects for which the Church itself was divinely established, which, to a large extent, absorb its best labour and richest liberality, and for the character and results of which it must always sustain the primary responsibility, to be subsidiary and friendly to it, or separate and independent?"¹

The building of the new school marked the beginning of a new era. The name which the school had borne since its establishment was discontinued, and the intimate association with the Methodist Chapel and preachers no longer formed part of the economy of the institution. It is a matter of conjecture how far the erection of the new school met with the approval of all the Methodist teachers who had been engaged in Wesley Street, or of the members of Society and adherents of Methodism who had supported the school up to that time. Possibly all were agreed upon the urgency of providing accommodation of a better kind than had hitherto been possible, in order that the work should not be hindered. It would appear, however, that a large and influential body of Methodists were of the opinion that the new school did not satisfy their requirements. It was no longer, in name or intention, a "Methodist" institution. The attitude of the preachers lends confirmation to this view. They held aloof. An exception is to be noticed, however, in the case of the Rev. Joseph Benson, who came from London in December, 1814, to preach the funeral sermon of his intimate friend, Matthew Mayer.

Henceforward, for some years, the interests of the Stockport Methodists in Sunday school work were divided. Part held with the system of an independent school, founded upon "broad and liberal principles," in which persons of differing creeds could work together; while other Methodists, following the lead of the ministers, preferred a school of their own, definitely attached to the Methodist Society, whose Committee would be amenable

¹ *Life of Jabez Bunting*, p. 298.

to the discipline of the Connexion, and whose object would be the training of the scholars for membership of the Church, when years of discretion had been attained. When Conference formulated its first code of rules for the government of Sunday schools, the following was one of the general principles then adopted:—

Every Christian Church or Society is not only obliged to exert a proper control over the religious education of its own youth, but has also a deep and permanent interest in the result of that education; and is therefore required, in justice to itself, to retain those Sunday Schools which are supported, wholly or principally, by its contributions, its labours, or its influences, under the superintendence and scriptural jurisdiction of its pastors, and of its other regular authorities.

* * * *

Wesleyan Methodist Sunday schools were established in Stockport in the year 1810. The ministers stationed in the circuit in 1809 were the Revs. John Barber (who was President of the Conference in 1807), George Morley, and Philip Jameson; and in 1810 Charles Gloyne, Thomas Stanley, and William Jones. The members of Society in 1810 numbered 1483, and this showed a decrease of six hundred compared with two years before.

The records relating to the establishment of Wesleyan Sunday schools in Stockport are, unfortunately, very scanty. There have been many changes since that time. Chapels and schools have been pulled down or transferred to other uses, and in the consequent migrations of congregations and scholars many minute books and other documents which would have been valuable from a historian's standpoint have either been lost or destroyed. The esteemed historian of Stockport, Dr. Heginbotham, however, was able to gather some particulars, which he published in his monumental work. From him we learn that the first Wesleyan Sunday school was erected in St. Petersgate in 1810. This building disappeared long ago. The site was cleared, and is now covered with offices and other business premises. When the school was opened, classes were formed for teaching writing and arithmetic on week-evenings. This probably gave rise to the notion that teaching writing on the Sabbath Day was

the main cause of difference between the Methodist Sunday school workers of a hundred years ago.

If numbers be an indication of success, the promoters of the St. Petersgate School would consider themselves justified in the step they had taken. At the end of the first year there were 1,203 scholars on the books, 563 being boys and 640 girls, under the charge of sixty-one teachers. The school continued to grow, and the committee were met with the problem created by such success: How were the scholars to be accommodated? In 1816 the number of scholars had increased to 1,280, and the teachers to 120. It was then decided to erect a second school in John Street, Portwood, near the residence formerly occupied by Mr. James Heald, who later became Member of Parliament for Stockport. This school was opened on Sunday, November 30, 1817, by the Rev. H. S. Hopwood. This institution received three hundred scholars from the school in St. Petersgate. The building in John Street is still standing (though not now used for the purpose for which it was erected), and may be identified by a stone slab on the upper portion of the wall, giving the date of a subsequent enlargement.

The next development in Methodist Sunday schools took place three years later, and was one of considerable importance, for extensions of the work were undertaken in three different parts of the town. Schools were begun in Edgeley, Higher Hillgate, and Newbridge Lane, in each case in rented buildings. In the *Stockport Advertiser* of June 27, 1823, there is the announcement that the "Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School in Stockport" had opened a school the previous Sunday in Mr. Stringer's buildings, Newbridge Lane. In 1820 a school was opened in Fogg Street, Higher Hillgate, in rooms over what is now Mr. John Birkett's baker's shop. These extensions were successful, and with five schools, namely, St. Petersgate, John Street, Edgeley, Fogg Street, and Newbridge Lane, the Committee had 1,939 scholars and 133 teachers.

The question which now had to be faced was how to

accommodate these scholars in permanent homes, and, by way of solving such problem, during the years 1820 to 1825 we see a remarkable era of school-building. The Wesleyan Committee built the first Brentnall Street School in 1822, Edgeley in 1823, Newbridge Lane in 1824; and the Committee of Stockport Sunday School built Heaviley School in 1822, Lancashire Hill in 1820, and their Heaton Mersey School was enlarged in 1822. That is a remarkable record. It would be notable to-day, when the town is, of course, considerably larger and more populous than it was ninety years ago. There is a striking similarity in the design of all these schools. In each case there were several cottages built underneath the large room, and the entrance to the schoolroom was by a flight of steps at one end of the building. The rent from the cottages solved the difficulty of maintaining the upkeep of the fabric, for this source of income was almost as good as an endowment fund to the trustees.

In 1824 the Sunday School Committee found it necessary to enlarge the school in John Street. Two years later Tiviot Dale Chapel was opened—an event of importance not merely locally but to the Connexion. The preachers on that occasion were the Revs. Dr. Adam Clarke, Robert Newton, and Jabez Bunting. The scholars from St. Petersgate School were then transferred to the new Tiviot Dale School.

* * * *

The first Brentnall Street School was erected in the street of that name in 1822. The earliest document relates to the purchase of the site, and is a deed transferring 680 yards of land in Brentnall Street “on the westerly side of the turnpike road running between Macclesfield and Buxton and Stockport,” from Samuel Dodge, linen draper, and Thomas Brentnall, cotton spinner, to Jeremiah Andrew Bury, Thomas Cartwright, Thomas Bury, and John Mayer Middleton. The first four names appear on the Committee of the Wesley Street School. At the time under notice Wellington Road had not been made, and the turnpike road mentioned in the

deed was, of course, Hillgate. Brentnall Street then, and for many years afterwards, was closed at the end where the present school now stands, and the site covered by gardens. The style of the building erected in Brentnall Street was the one previously noticed—five cottages underneath, with a large room for school purposes over them. The spaces for the doorways of the cottages may still be traced, although the hand of time is rapidly toning down the differences in the colour of brickwork. The rents of the houses provided an assured income, and as the school progressed the cottages could be converted into classrooms. The scheme may seem very prudent or cautious on the part of those responsible for the maintenance of the building, but at any rate it is one that has been adopted by the promoters of the modern Central Halls of Methodism; and the trustees of the splendid building at Westminster, built from the proceeds of the Twentieth Century Fund—to mention one of the latest cases—have a valuable income from the rents derived from business firms occupying the ground floor. The first trustees of the old school in Brentnall Street were:—

JOHN MIDDLETON, cotton manufacturer.

THOMAS FERNLEY, the younger, of Stockport, cotton spinner.

JAMES HEALD, of Portwood, esquire.

WILLIAM OLDFIELD, of Hope Hill, shopkeeper.

MARTIN SWINDELLS, of Ingersley, in the County of Chester, spinner.

JOSEPH ALLEN, Heaton Norris, stonemason.

THOMAS RATHBONE SMITH, of Stockport, schoolmaster.

JOHN FERNLEY, of Stockport, spinner.

JOHN BERTINSHAW, Stockport, spinner.

HENRY HOWARD, Stockport, spinner.

JONATHAN WATSON, Stockport, spinner.

JOSHUA BAKER, Stockport, tobacconist.

JOSEPH WILDGOOSE, Heaton Norris, carpenter.

THOMAS CAIN, Stockport, shoemaker.

GEORGE SHIPTON HOLEHOUSE, Stockport, stocking manufacturer.

The school was opened at the close of the year 1822. Unfortunately the writer has not been able to come across any account of the opening ceremony. The first scholar to be enrolled was Mary Hilton, and she afterwards became a teacher—which seems to be an appropriate circumstance.

The internal arrangements of the school were such as obtained in most schools of that date. There was a pulpit on the side farthest from the street, and the classes were arranged in hollow squares round the room. At the end nearest the present Wellington Road were situated the seats usually occupied by the superintendent and visitors. In later days, when Mr. William Hooley was superintendent, his seat was distinguished by a cushion, with his initials embroidered thereon. At the opposite end, over the door and stairway, was the gallery reserved for the infants. This department could be shut off from the large room by movable shutters, and these were taken down on special occasions so that all could participate in the proceedings. The system of "grading" schools may be accounted by some to be a modern development of Sunday school work, but from its beginning the gallery in the old school had its equipment and organisation quite apart from the rest. It had its own teaching staff, secretary, and superintendent, the whole, of course, being subject to the general superintendent, and he being responsible to the Committee. All the Methodist schools in the town at that time were under the general direction of the Committee, which met periodically at the different schools under their charge. There was a good deal of self-government allowed, however, to each institution. We find in the minute books frequent mention of the teachers' meetings voting sums of money for the purchase of necessities for the school. On the other hand, Bibles, catechisms, and "reading-made-easys" generally came from the General Committee. In those days the teachers frequently elected their own superintendent and visitors. This practice was altered in later years, and the General Committee made

the election, and notified the teachers that certain appointments had been made. Later, the original practice was reverted to, and still continues.

The earliest list of officers and teachers of Brentnall Street of which we have any record is for 1832:—

Superintendent: JOHN CAWLEY.

Visitors:

James Lees	James Gaskel
John Preston	John Jackson
Matthew Bedford	

Teachers:

BOYS' CLASSES—

Joseph Mellor	Joseph Marsland
John Hyde	Henry Brickill
Thomas Cooper	Joseph Beard
John Royle	Samuel Maynes
Isaac Holes	John Buckley
Thomas Birch	James Lees, junr.
William Maynes	John Maynes
William Miller	Thomas Preston
Henry Staley	John Fletcher

GIRLS' CLASSES—

William Cooper	Nancy Bolton
H. Birchenough	John Fisher
John Lawton	Mary Hilton
George Thornton	Jane Baldwin
George Mellor	John Dunkerley
Ellen Peel	Ellen Morley
Frances Nixon	Hannah Marshall
Jane Platt	Isaiah Hague

Thomas Preston, *Secretary*.

A noticeable feature is the number of male teachers in charge of the girls' classes. At the time under notice there were 465 scholars on the register, and we are told that repeatedly there was a larger attendance on Sunday morning than in the afternoon. This is a matter which should occasion surprise, for the children of those days had to go to work at an earlier age than the children of

to-day, and Saturday was almost as long a working day as the other days of the week. Yet this did not deter the teachers and scholars from regular attendance at Sunday morning school. The practice of awarding prizes for attendance was in vogue so long ago as 1838, though it would be interesting to have a present-day child's opinion of the books which then formed the reward. Some of them could now be purchased new for twopence!

One of the earliest workers in the school was Mr. Joseph Mellor. We have no record when Mr. Mellor joined the school, but in 1834 he was appointed a visitor, and in 1843 a co-superintendent with Mr. Henry Hough. When the Stockport Circuit was divided, Mr. Mellor was the leader of a Class in the Hillgate Society. All Mr. Mellor's children became teachers in the school. Of these children, possibly Mr. Henry Mellor became the best known to people who are now living, by reason of the long period of his service as visitor. Another son, Mr. James Mellor, was the father of Mr. Joseph Mellor, who was appointed secretary of the school in 1880. A daughter of the elder Joseph Mellor was the mother of Mr. Matthew Swindells. From the beginning of the school until the present time Mr. Mellor has not been without descendants at work in the institution. Three of his great-grandsons now hold office—Mr. William Swindells, Mr. James H. Hallworth, and Mr. Joseph Hallworth, junr. There are also five great-great-grandchildren in the school to carry on the succession and, we trust, continue the work which has been handed down to them. Mr. Joseph Mellor was a tall, stern man, and a terror to an obstreperous boy. At a time when manners were less gentle than they are to-day, it was quite sufficient for a teacher to say that he "would fetch Mr. Mellor." The lad knew that unless he behaved himself there was trouble ahead. Mr. Mellor worshipped at Hillgate Chapel. If he felt at all drowsy during a warm Sunday evening's service he would stand in his pew, and if there happened to be a draught in chapel, he

placed his silk handkerchief on his bald head. Both actions indicated that he wished to hear the preacher in comfort, but if either method were adopted to-day somebody might smile. Mr. Mellor retired from the school about 1844. After his retirement Mr. James Taylor became co-superintendent, but he only retained the position for a few months.

In May, 1825, a return was made¹ of the number of scholars attending the Sunday schools of Stockport. The total number attending schools belonging to the Church of England was 2,510; Stockport Sunday School and its branches 3,965; and the Wesleyan Schools: St. Peter's-gate 773, Portwood 483, Brentnall Street 548, Edgeley 302, Newbridge Lane 250; total, 2,356. The total for the town was 9,380 scholars, with 700 teachers.

Quarter Days vied with the Anniversary as red-letter days in the lives of the scholars. On that day they were taken to chapel to recite the catechism in the presence of parents and friends, and to listen to an address from the preacher. The service was held in Hillgate Chapel, and after the building of Tiviot Dale Chapel the scholars were taken on alternative Quarter Days to that place of worship. After the division of the circuits the practice gradually fell into disuse, and each school became more self-centred.

Reference has already been made to the Anniversary being an important day. From the first the annual sermon was an event of considerable interest, not merely from the fact that a good preacher was generally sought, but also that the day provided the chief income of the Committee managing the schools. Each Wesleyan school had its own particular Anniversary service, which was generally held at two o'clock in the afternoon in the schoolroom. There were also annual sermons preached in the chapels. The following advertisement is taken from the *Stockport Advertiser* of April 23, 1824:—

¹ Baines's *History of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (published 1825).

STOCKPORT WESLEYAN METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL INSTITUTION.

The ANNIVERSARY SERMONS at the Hillgate and Park Chapels are appointed to be preached by Mr. WILLIAM DAWSON, of Barnbow, near Leeds, on SUNDAY the 25th of April, 1824, and collections made in aid of the above Institution.

Service at two o'clock in the afternoon at the Hillgate Chapel; and at six o'clock in the evening at the Park Chapel.

Appropriate hymns will be sung at each service.

There are upwards of 2,300 children belonging to this Institution, the support of which depends upon the liberality of a generous public.

Silver will be expected at the doors; for the gallery not less than one shilling.

When times were hard and school finances low, the teachers did the work of portrage, cleaning the large room, and making it presentable to the visitors who crowded the school on "Sermon Sunday." An entry in the minute book of 1835 says: "It is particularly requested that the following things be noticed a week before the Anniversary:—

1. The room to be swept without degging.
2. The candles to be dipped.
3. Candles and candlesticks fixed round the room, in the pulpit, orchestra, and small rooms.
4. The snuffers to be in their proper place.
5. A table for one of the small rooms.

There were two "tea treats" during the year—one being held on the first of May, and the other later in the year, the latter sometimes being called "The Cheadle Wakes Tea Party," the proceeds of this party years afterwards being devoted to the library fund. This tea party was a very popular affair, the room generally being crowded. Judging by the balance-sheets, the fare provided was plain, but even that must have been much better than many were accustomed to, for the "hungry 'forties" were lean years. As a matter of fact, a subscription list was raised in the school in 1841 to relieve the acute distress among the scholars. This distress is further indicated by the small collection taken at the Anniversary the following year, when only £13 10s. was raised. The number of scholars rapidly fell to under three hundred—many of those who stayed away probably being too hungry or ill-clad to attend school.



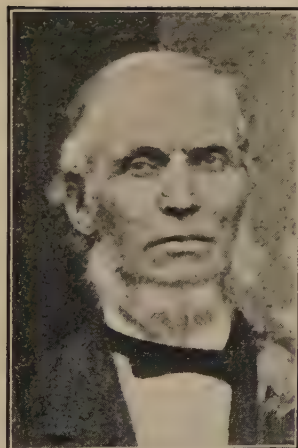
Mr. William Bradley



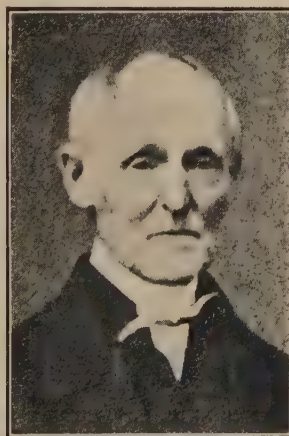
Mr. James Davenport



Mr. William Hooley



Mr. Henry Mellor



Mr. William Axon

We find the same names occurring year after year on the Committees appointed to manage the "tea treats," and the nature of their duties may be gathered from the fact that the programmes generally consisted of about eighteen recitations, dialogues, and speeches. All the bread for the party was "home made," and a gentleman has told the writer that as a boy he often used to take the currant loaves to be weighed in a workshop at the end of Brentnall Street. One of the early programmes has been preserved, and is here presented:—

BRENTNALL STREET SUNDAY SCHOOL.

ANNUAL TEA MEETING,

MAY 1, 1845.

Opening Hymn, 570. — Tune, "Justification"

Prayer.

Hymn, 473. — Tune, "Creation"

Recitations.

1.—19th Psalm THOMAS BRANDRETH

2.—"The Stinging Nettle" PETER SCARLETT

3.—"Not Yet" MARY ELLEN LOMAS

Hymn, 500. — Tune, "Missionary"

4.—"Joan, or Trustworthy" .. SUSANNAH LONGBOTTOM

5.—"The Fool Refuted" ZADOK WEST

6.—"Memoir of a Young Female" ANN ROBINSON

7.—"The Farmhouse, or Kindness" ... AMOS ASPINALL

Hymn, 222. — Tune, "Printer"

8.—"The Missionary Clock" MARY SHELMEKDINE

9.—"The Hospital of Fools"

JOHN ASPINALL and twenty others

10.—"Everybody may be of some use" WILLIAM BAYLEY

11.—"A Conversation on the Month of May and May
Festivals, by a Young Man in the School"

SUSANNAH LONGBOTTOM & ANN ROBINSON

Hymn, 475. — Tune, "Cleft of the Rock"

12.—"The Adventure" THOMAS BRANDRETH

13.—“Reflections of a Working Man ”

WILLIAM SCARLETT

14.—“Dialogue on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ”

MARIA COOPER & ELIZABETH HEGGINBOTHAM

15.—“I Cannot Repent ”

MARY ANN HART

16.—“The Pedlar ”

PETER SCARLETT

*National Anthem.**Prayer.*

Two lines in the minute book tell of the beginning of an institution which has lasted up to the present time. On December 9, 1838, it was decided “that on the monthly teachers’ meeting the school be dismissed at three o’clock.” All old and present scholars know what “Three o’clock day” is, though all may not know that the custom of dismissing the school at three o’clock in order that the teachers’ meeting may be held is nearly eighty years old.

The school library was established in 1833. The first intimation is contained in a minute under date of June 2 of that year: “Moved by John Jackson, and seconded by John Royle, that the new library in contemplation be recommended by the teachers.” The first grant came from the General Committee responsible for the management of the Wesleyan schools of the town, and afterwards a source of income for the library was the October tea meeting. The income does not seem to have been sufficient in the early days, for after ten years (in 1844) a deputation, consisting of Mr. William Cooper and Mr. Charles Moseley, was appointed to lay before the General Committee the state of the library. The reply of the Committee to the deputation is indicated in a resolution which was considered at the visitors’ meeting, held on October 20, 1844: “In consequence of a proposition having been made at a meeting of the General School Committee, held in Hillgate Vestry, for the purpose of uniting the greater part of Brentnall Street School and Edgeley School libraries to a number of books now lying in Hillgate Vestry, with the object of

forming a central Circuit Library for the local preachers, leaders, and Sunday school teachers of the South Circuit, it was unanimously resolved that, as the library belonging to the Brentnall Street School had been raised by the officers, teachers, and friends for the children of Brentnall Street School alone, they could not allow it to be removed, but that it remain as it now stands, for the use of the officers, teachers, and scholars of the school; but that the local preachers and leaders of the South Circuit have access to it." The Teachers' Meeting considered this resolution, which they endorsed, and made a further request that the books in the Hillgate Vestry be divided between Brentnall Street and Edgeley Schools. We are not told what was the ultimate result of the appeal to the General Committee, but at any rate the books in the library of Brentnall Street were not removed.

Reference has just been made to the "South" Circuit. Stockport was divided into two circuits in 1839, Tiviot Dale Chapel being made head of the circuit on the north side of the town, with 909 members of Society; and Hillgate Chapel, head of the south side, with 685 members. The River Mersey may be taken as a convenient, though not exact, boundary line between the two circuits. The class leaders of Hillgate Circuit at the time of the division were Messrs. Bowter, Joseph Mellor, William Maynes, Thomas Henshall, John Jackson, Taylor, Joshua Baker, Bradshaw, James Bolton, George Hammond, John Cawley, Peter Fletcher, Henry Hough, Robert Nield, Wood, Williamson, Thomas Bateson, Chadwick, Thomas Cooper, William Nixon, John Sykes, Greenhalgh, John Evans, and Hincots. Some of these were actively interested in the work of Brentnall Street.

A noticeable feature of the school seventy years ago is the rapid change in the teaching staff. Teachers were proposed at almost every Teachers' Meeting. This may have been due to a diminution of zeal on the part of those appointed, or their recognition of inability to perform the task they had undertaken. Frequently we find a teacher being moved to a class higher after having

been only three months in one position. The story is told of a young man who was unable to read being appointed teacher, and actually learning to read by the aid of his own scholars. If others were in the same unfortunate position, and did not possess the determination to remedy so serious a drawback, the frequent withdrawals from the work need not cause much surprise.

There were notable exceptions, however, to the frequent changes just referred to. Between the years 1840 and 1850 several gentlemen were appointed to positions of responsibility who were destined to exert a profound influence upon the life of the school for years. Mr. William Cooper was made a visitor in 1841. He was one of the first scholars in Fogg Street School, and retained his membership of the present school until his death, which occurred in 1880. His venerable appearance, at the front of the school, is one of the early memories of the present writer. A beautiful photograph of Mr. Cooper hangs in the officers' room, and from that position his benignant countenance has taught men to be calm and dispassionate in their deliberations.

In 1844 Mr. William Richardson was appointed a visitor. He came to the school as a teacher in June, 1842, and his early promotion probably indicated his strong individuality. It was not uncommon in those days to use the dialect from the desk, and Mr. Richardson frequently spoke thus. Hence, when he said to an unruly boy, "If tha' doesna' behave thyself a'hl fetch thee out," the lad knew there was trouble in store if he did not obey. Mr. Richardson was one of the strong men of the school, and worked hard for its success. He was not deterred by slight difficulties, and often found a way out when other men would give up a task in discouragement. One Sunday morning a mother came to school to say that she had prepared breakfast for her son in time for him to get to school, but that he refused to come. Mr. Richardson and Mr. Henry Mellor went to interview the boy, and the two officers found the youngster very defiant. He told the two visitors that neither they nor

anyone else could compel him to go where he did not want. Mr. Richardson said: "I have sons at home bigger than you are, and they do as they are told; and if your mother says you are to go to school this morning, you are going." So saying, he picked up the young lad, put him across his shoulder, head on one side, feet on the other, and carried him to Brentnall Street, where he was admonished for his obstreperousness. Years passed. A short time before his death Mr. Richardson received a letter from the boy, now grown to a man, stating that he had lived to repent of the foolishness of his youth, and had become a missionary on the foreign field. He mentioned the circumstance of being carried to school, which really had a very important bearing upon his life.

Two years after Mr. Richardson was made a visitor Mr. Henry Mellor received the same honour. Mr. Mellor was the son of Mr. Joseph Mellor, previously mentioned, and on his appointment was only twenty-six years of age—probably the youngest man to receive the honour, either before or since; and he retained the position until his death in November, 1885. Mr. Mellor entered the school in 1827, about the same time as another who is remembered by many old scholars—Mr. Thomas Trueman. His name was on the roll, as scholar and officer, for fifty-eight years. Mr. Mellor was a man of discipline, and would not tolerate much levity in the school. Prompt in his own time-keeping, he expected others to be the same. His manner in the desk, when opening or closing school, was always calm and deliberate, and he viewed his work there with much seriousness. He also, like Mr. Cooper and Mr. Richardson, made an impression upon the school which is felt even at the present time.

The office of visitor is one which may prompt some inquiry as to its origin. The holder of the office was not one who of necessity had to visit the sick, though that labour was frequently undertaken. Visitors were really assistant superintendents, and each was responsible for the supervision of three or four classes. It was the duty

of the visitor to see that his classes were supplied with teachers, that the absentee scholars were visited, and that promotions were regularly made. In the minutes recording Mr. Cooper's appointment in 1841 this division of labour is illustrated :

Agreed that William Cooper and John Lomas become visitors in the school. That Joseph Mellor take charge of the fifth, sixth, and seventh classes of girls, and William Cooper the second, third, and fourth classes of girls. That Christopher Knowles take charge of the fifth, sixth, and seventh classes of boys, and John Lomas the second, third, and fourth classes of boys; and Henry Lees and Isaac Wright take charge of the gallery.

Visitors continued to be appointed up to 1912, when the office was abolished, though the division of the school into sections had ceased to be observed long before the date mentioned.. On September 10, 1843, Mr. Thomas Brandreth was promoted from the Class of Honour to become a teacher, retained that position with distinction for thirty years, then became a visitor, was finally superintendent, and died in office in 1895.



CHAPTER III.

IN 1845 Mr. William Bradley entered the school as assistant superintendent. This was an appointment which had an important bearing upon the prosperity of the institution. His colleague in the superintendency was Mr. Henry Hough, who had succeeded Mr. John Cawley in that capacity about 1840. Both Mr. Cawley and Mr. Hough were drapers—the former with a shop in the Market Place, the latter's place of business being in Lower Hillgate, just below the chapel. Before Mr. Bradley's advent there had been many complaints about the irregular and late attendance of teachers and scholars. After his appointment, however, a noticeable change took place—the registers show a very marked increase in attendance. Mr. Bradley at that time had just returned to Stockport as partner with Mr. Fernley at the cotton mill on the opposite side of the street to the school. It was his invariable custom to be at the mill before six o'clock in the morning, and it was a serious matter for any worker who came late! This characteristic of punctuality Mr. Bradley carried into the school. Some years afterwards one of the visitors was appointed to take the opening exercises from the desk one Sunday afternoon. He happened to be two minutes late; but when he arrived he found his place taken by the superintendent, and the opening hymn already announced. This gave great offence, and the visitor left the school, never to return.

Mr. James Davenport came to the school as a teacher in May, 1844, and three years later was appointed secretary, a position he held for over twenty-one years. In fact, he only relinquished that particular branch of work when the present school was built, and he was placed in charge of the infants' department. The activities of Mr. Davenport were not confined to his secretarial duties. Those who remember him know that he simply

bubbled over with music. The service of praise was his especial delight. In January, 1849, he was appointed to prepare the music for the forthcoming Anniversary. Four years before this, in 1845, Mr. John Bradley had been appointed to the same office, and this seems to have been the first appointment of its kind. Mr. Davenport's work was evidently successful, for he was appointed year after year to lead the singing at "sermon time." It is quite possible that the substantial increase in the anniversary collection was one result of the preparatory work of Mr. Davenport, for the interest of the scholars would doubtless be stimulated by the special pains taken to induce them to sing heartily and correctly. In 1849 the collection was £25; in 1850, the first year of Mr. Davenport's appointment, nearly £37.

Following closely upon Mr. Davenport's appointment came Mr. David Fogg's entrance upon the work of teaching. This occurred in August, 1847. Mr. Fogg was a proficient penman, and spent hundreds of hours teaching the art of writing to scholars on week-evenings. He was almost the last of his contemporaries to pass away, and through his long life never lost his regard for the school of his youth. Although he afterwards joined the Methodist New Connexion, he regularly came to the anniversary sermons of Brentnall Street, and attended more than seventy of these interesting festivals.

Among the teachers' appointments, as recorded in the old minute book, the names of two friends occur close to each other. These are Mr. William Hooley and his former schoolfellow, Mr. John Barlow, who then lived in High Street, afterwards of Dean Row and Wilmslow. Mr. Hooley was appointed a teacher on August 12, 1849, and Mr. Barlow in December of the same year. The two had been boys together at the Stockport Grammar School, and while playing in the yard Mr. Barlow saw the accident which later caused Mr. Hooley to be lame for the rest of his life. Although only twenty-two at the time of his appointment (he was born January 19, 1827), Mr. Hooley was placed in charge of the Boys' Class of

Honour, with Mr. James Mellor (son of Mr. Joseph Mellor, the elder, and father of Mr. Joseph Mellor, the secretary of a later period) as his colleague. He was by nature a student, and the enforced confinement indoors resulting from the injury to his knee, provided opportunities for further enriching an already well-stored mind. He was a great lover of nature. One of his methods for obtaining the interest of the young men under his charge was to form a class for the study of botany, and on Saturday afternoons the class rambled in the country, seeking new specimens and receiving instruction from their teacher. Different scholars have diversified interests. It is therefore not surprising to know that the botanical class of Mr. Hooley was sometimes placed before his lessons on Sunday in the estimation of some of those who were proud to call him teacher. When, years later, a superintendent was needed, all eyes turned to Mr. Hooley, and he was promoted to the higher office—a position he retained until his death in 1884.

Another notable teacher appointed about this time was Mr. William Lingard, who was transferred from the Young Men's Class on July 9, 1848. Mr. Lingard is still remembered with much affection by former scholars, who, alas! can no longer lay claim to being young. He was quiet in demeanour, and performed his duties in the school in a manner which commended him to all. He took a deep interest in temperance work, and later became one of the founders of Brentnall Street Band of Hope, one of the first organisations of its kind in Stockport, and at the present time the oldest surviving Band of Hope in the town.

In the natural order of things a change had come over the list of trustees in the course of the first twenty-five years of the school's existence. In 1847 a new trust deed was executed. This document is dated September 9, in the year named. The reason assigned for the preparation of a fresh list is given in the trust deed as being that several of the original trustees had died, others wished to be released, and also that the town had been

divided since the first deed had been drawn up, and the term "superintendent minister," mentioned in the first document, had now reference only to the minister in charge of the South Circuit. The following were the members of the second trust:—

Jonathan Crowther	Henry Hough
John Middleton	John Sergent
Thomas Fernley	John Jackson
James Heald	J. W. Rigby
T. R. Smith	William Bradley
Joseph Allen	John Wilson Bayley
John Fernley	John Evans
Jonathan Watson	Arthur Smith
Joshua Baker	John Machin
Joseph Wildgoose	Dennison L. Hebron
Thomas Caine	George Evans
Thomas Rowland	John Bradley

Mr. Thomas Swindells came as a teacher in 1852. Shortly afterwards he was made a visitor, and placed in charge of the infants' department in the gallery, a position he held for several years. Many old teachers speak of the happy and "comfortable" time they spent in the junior division of the school during this time. Mr. Swindells was the son-in-law of Mr. Joseph Mellor, and Mr. Matthew Swindells is his son.

Mr. William Heginbotham was appointed a visitor in 1852 and Mr. Abraham Lomas a teacher the same year. Mr. Heginbotham was tall and spare, usually wore a stock, and gesticulated freely while in the desk. Many who were then children remember him by this latter characteristic. Not that this was the only impression he made upon youthful minds, for many of his sayings are quoted verbatim, and are still as valuable as when first uttered. Mr. Lomas had been a scholar in Mr. Hooley's class, and was also secretary to the botanical class. In 1851 Mr. Peter Scarlett became a teacher; in 1854 Mr. James Rigby began the same work; in 1855 Mr. George Leah; 1856, Mr. Joseph Simpson; and in 1857, Mr. John Unwin and his brother-in-law, Mr. Robert Swann.

Mr. William Hiram Axon came to the school as a visitor in 1856, when he was sixty-three years of age—a time when most men imagine they have had enough of Sunday school work, and are anxious to hand on their duties to younger men. Those who remember this good man rarely speak of him except as “Old” Mr. Axon, and his high Christian character is still spoken of by those who had the privilege of his acquaintance. It seems, from particulars supplied to the writer by a relative, that Mr. Axon was the great-grandson of a Huguenot refugee who settled in England after the Edict of Nantes was revoked in France. As is well known, the refugees were responsible for the rapid development of silk-weaving in this country. Mr. Axon’s father erected a two-storeyed silk mill in High Bank Side, Stockport, with a dwelling-house adjoining, and here he is said to have entertained Dr. Bunting, Dr. Newton, the Rev. Adam Clarke, and other notable Methodist preachers. The family worshipped at Park Chapel, and afterwards at Hillgate Chapel. “Personally, Mr. William Axon possessed all the qualities of a successful business man—method, routine, punctuality, application—these being crowned by a fear of God and a keen sense of duty. Little is known of his mother; but we infer from the lives of her sons and daughters that she, too, was a devout woman.”

As a youth Mr. Axon attended the Methodist Sunday School in St. Petersgate, and was possibly one of the first scholars. At the age of twenty he became a teacher in the same school. At twenty-seven, having served his apprenticeship with Messrs. Christy & Company, hat manufacturers, he was sent to represent his firm at Bristol, and afterwards to London, where he stayed until his retirement from business in 1856. The following was among the papers he left:—

This is to certify that the bearer, William Axon, has been a teacher in the Methodist Sunday School, Stockport, for about seven years, and has always conducted himself in a truly Christian manner during that time, and we beg leave to recom-

mend him to the approbation of the friends of Sunday schools and to Christian friends in general, wherever Providence may fix his residence.

(Signed) T. R. SMITH, Secretary.

Stockport, September 3, 1820.

In spite of his advanced age when he returned to his native town, Mr. Axon was able to render most distinguished service to the school for nearly twenty years.

Mr. James Howard came to the school in September, 1859. He had then recently come from Northampton to work for his uncle, Mr. James Simpson, a boot and shoe dealer, and also a local preacher and class leader. Very early in his teaching career Mr. Howard was appointed to conduct the opening exercises of afternoon school, and was afterwards told by Mr. Bradley, the superintendent, that he was probably the youngest man who had ever occupied the desk. The desk appointments in those days were generally reserved for men who had served an apprenticeship, so to speak, in other departments of the work.

In November, 1853, a deep impression was made by the tragic death of several scholars. The circumstances were so unusual, and the grief of the officers and teachers so keen, that a record was inserted in *Early Days*, a magazine devoted to children, and published by the Methodist Publishing House. The following extract appeared in the magazine of March, 1854:—

No fewer than five scholars belonging to Brentnall Street Wesleyan Sunday School, Stockport, died in little more than a week during last November; nearly all of them of scarlet fever.

A special service to improve their death for the benefit of survivors was held in the school, which was attended by the parents and relatives of the departed, as well as by scholars and teachers, when suitable addresses were delivered by the superintendents to a crowded and deeply-affected audience; and brief memoirs were read. The names of those who had been so suddenly removed were: Betty Newton, aged eight years; Sarah Ann Heath, aged nine; Henry Selby, aged seven; James Melvin, aged ten; Isaac Hulme, aged twenty; and Samuel Lockett, aged nine.

Fifty years ago the time for beginning afternoon school was half-past one. This did not allow much time for those who had attended Hillgate Chapel in the morning

(in those days sermons were not short!), and consequently the school authorities had to deal with many late-comers. We may imagine Mr. Bradley's feelings as the laggards trooped into the room! In 1853 the Teachers' Meeting took drastic steps to deal with those who would not or could not attend early. It was decided that, as soon as school was opened, a card bearing the words "Too Late!" should be hung outside the door as a warning to those who had the misfortune to be behind time. We are not told if the unfortunate ones were eventually admitted; we suppose they were. It was the custom for the school-keeper to stand inside the large room, with his back against the door, and those who were outside were not admitted until the signal had been given by the superintendent. There were no means provided whereby the scholars could be warned that the time for opening school was nigh at hand, but old John Kay, the school-keeper, readily overcame that difficulty. Lowering the end window nearest Wellington Road, he thrust his arm through the opening, and violently swung a handbell—always to the great delight of the children in the street below. The time for opening afternoon school remained at half-past one until 1868, when it was changed to a quarter to two; later to two o'clock; and now it has got to quarter-past two.

The question of a teachers' tea meeting was brought before the Teachers' Meeting in 1856, when it was decided, on the proposition of Mr. Thomas Brandreth and Mr. William Hooley, that such a meeting be held. This was the first of a long series of festive gatherings, in which Mr. Hooley always seemed particularly interested.

In those days there were no annual teachers' meetings such as we understand them nowadays. The present annual meeting is held in March each year, and is called for the election of officers and various committees, and the business usually occupies two hours of close application. Fifty years ago this kind of work was done by the Committee which managed the institution, and the teachers were called together and notified of the several appoint-

ments, which they generally confirmed. In 1862 the Society Tea Meeting was originated. This meeting seems to have been specially arranged to hear the report of the Committee on Sunday school work, and to receive notification of the appointments. A little memorandum book has been preserved, which gives an account of the first of these gatherings. There were fewer than fifty present at the first meeting, but five years later we are told that 324 sat down to tea, and the room was crowded. Quoting from the little pocket book, we read, in the report of the third meeting: "Account of the Yearly Tea Meeting, held in Brentnall Street Sunday School, April 29, 1864, for the election and confirmation of officers in Brentnall Street and Edgeley Sunday Schools." The following addressed the meeting:—The Rev. J. Keyworth, the Rev. Timothy Moxon, Messrs. William Bradley, William Hooley, John Wilson Bayley, William Cooper, Adshead, Barrow, Hopwood, Ford, W. Richardson, Peter Scarlett, James Davenport, Thomas Brandreth, Thorneley, and Leah. The list is certainly a long one, and one hopes that the memory of the audience was capable of carrying away all that was said. These tea meetings were continued for some years, but ultimately fell into disuse, as the two schools began each to manage its own affairs by a separate committee, and a meeting of joint Societies for confirmation of officers became unnecessary.

Reference has already been made to the method adopted by the founders of the Wesleyan Sunday Schools in Stockport for securing an income from anniversary services. That system was a general anniversary service for the benefit of all the schools under the Committee's charge, and a local anniversary for each school. The individual schools seem to have had full liberty to choose their own preachers for these very important occasions.

Possibly the most interesting anniversary services of the school were those conducted by Mr. Charles Richardson, "The Lincolnshire Thresher." There had been notable preachers engaged before, such as the Rev. John Bowers, Rev. W. L. Thornton, Rev. Samuel Coley,

and "Squire" Brooke; but the unique character of the "Lincolnshire Thresher" as a man, and the wonderfully striking services he conducted, created such an impression that the influence has not been effaced up to the present day. After Mr. Richardson's marriage, seventeen years passed before he showed any special aptitude for public speaking in the Christian Church. His life had been spent as a general farm hand—"thresher, hedger and ditcher, whitewasher and wool-winder, shepherd and sheep-shearer, butcher, gardener, and carpenter. For years he was chaplain to his master's family, and conducted household worship morning and evening."

After he began to preach Mr. Richardson remained in service as a farm hand for about three years, and during that time he was leading thresher for his master. By-and-by his friends advised him to begin wool-winding on his own account. He accepted this advice, and wool-winding provided his means of livelihood when not engaged on his preaching tours. His fame as a preacher spread abroad, and he was in great demand for Sunday school anniversaries. The missionary cause was also very dear to his heart. He was a splendid "beggar." None of his contemporaries seemed to be able to induce the people to give as liberally as he. Sometimes he actually had the experience of getting more money than he required. How embarrassing that must have been! He was preaching the Sunday school sermons at Spalding in September, 1848, and of these services he wrote: "I was much put to it to know what to say about the collections, for they had money in hand. I told them that they need not send for me any more to beg for them, unless they were in want." Wherever he went, there were many conversions and good collections.

Mr. Richardson came to preach the sermons for Brentnall Street in February, 1858, when he was sixty-seven years old. Previous to his coming to Stockport he had suffered a very serious illness, but was then sufficiently well to take the services. In a letter, he said he preached in the schoolroom on the Sunday afternoon. "The place

was as hot as an oven. About twenty-three penitents were seeking the Lord, and the day closed well." He stayed in Stockport five days, conducting services each evening. He was entertained by Mr. Foley, who had a business establishment in Hillgate, just near the chapel. Of his experiences on his first visit Mr. Richardson wrote :

We had extraordinary times at Stockport last week. Towards the end the chapel was crowded in all parts. I continued with them until ten o'clock, but when I left both vestries were full of penitents, with whom the praying men were hard at work, encouraging them to lay hold on the Saviour.

In the following year (1859) the Lincolnshire Thresher was in Stockport again for the school sermons. On this occasion he remained from February 6 to 18. Similar scenes of conversion were witnessed as in the previous year. "Thank God," he writes, "there is a great number of those who were saved when I was here last still standing. There are fifty of them meeting in class connected with this chapel; and the work which then began has spread." Mr. Richardson came the following February (1860), although he had been so ill that he had feared his preaching days were over. On this occasion he also remained twelve days. He speaks of the communion rail being crowded with penitents, and numbered the conversions by *scores*.

In 1861 Mr. Richardson visited Stockport again. He had broken down in health during the winter, and had been confined to the house for weeks. "But," says his biographer, "with the first breath of spring he was again obedient to his marching orders, and went to Stockport to preach on behalf of the Sunday school, and gather more spiritual fruit in that field which had been so abundantly productive before." He had the joy of witnessing, during the four days he was in the town, the conversion of a son of a former superintendent minister of the Circuit. From Stockport he went to Wilmslow, and stayed with Mr. Barlow, at Dean Row, father of Mr. John Barlow, a former teacher in the School.

The last occasion on which this good man officiated as the preacher of the anniversary sermons of Brentnall

Street School was in February, 1862, when he was seventy-one years of age. He was now nearing the end of his journey; and, although he was as anxious as ever to proclaim the "joyful news of sins forgiven," his weary body sought repose from the arduous labour of nearly forty years' preaching. As an instance of his zeal for the work of the Lord, his letter home on this occasion is worth quoting:—

Stockport, Feb. 4, 1862.

I preached afternoon and night last Sunday for the schools. The day was very mild, and the chapel much crowded. A holy and powerful influence attended the Word, but I felt so much exhausted at the close of the evening service, that just as I was beginning the prayer meeting, and in the act of giving out a hymn, I felt a strange sort of sinking come over me, and fainted away. I was assisted into the vestry, and was very sick; but after a while I came round again, but was obliged to leave them and go home. I was glad to learn, however, that there were several seeking the Lord as penitents, and some found peace. Last night I was pretty well again, and had a full chapel, with a good time in preaching, and stayed in the after meeting till half-past nine. About twenty penitents came up to the communion rail. The praying men who assisted are in a good state, and did their work well. Before the week is out, I expect I shall have many souls saved. To God be all the glory!

Mr. Richardson died in the August of 1864, and only eternity will reveal the full extent of the wonderful triumphs which he won in all parts of the land. The services of the "Lincolnshire Thresher" on behalf of Brentnall Street School have not been forgotten, even after the lapse of fifty years; and those of his hearers who survive have happy memories of the joy pervading the anniversary services which he conducted. The collections on his visits were: 1858, £28; 1859, £38; 1860, £40; 1861, £47; 1862, £40.

The Band of Hope was formed in the school in 1861, and is now the oldest in Stockport. Many of the original promoters have gone to their reward. At a Teachers' Meeting, held on February 10, 1861, a resolution was proposed by Mr. Thomas Brandreth, and seconded by Mr. William Cooper, "that there be a Band of Hope in the school." The active promoters of the movement were Messrs. William Lingard, James Lingard, Joseph Simpson, Squire Taylor, and Thomas Brandreth. These were not

the only workers, of course, but they occupied positions where their influence was an important factor. The Society then launched has continued through the succeeding years, and after having celebrated its jubilee, still shows signs of vitality. In order to give the Band of Hope a start in life, all the teachers subscribed to a fund.

The year 1861 also saw the entrance of Mr. Samuel Rigby into the school as a teacher. His father and brother were also interested in Sunday School work, both being on the General Committee. Mr. Rigby came as a youth in his teens, and was placed in charge of a class of boys. All his life he has been deeply interested in the welfare of young men, and one of his chief delights when he joined the school was to seek out young fellows of his own age, and exert his influence towards the development of their own character. Mr. Rigby wrote a very legible hand, and spent hundreds of hours teaching the scholars writing on week-evenings. While the old school was in occupation that was to him an especial delight, and many have had cause to be grateful for the pains he took in instructing them in acquiring such a useful accomplishment. Mr. Henry Finney joined the school in 1861, as did also Mr. Edwin T. King, who later became the teacher of the senior class of young men.

Fifty years ago the movement to the suburbs of Stockport had already begun. The south end of the town grew rapidly, and Methodist families who removed thither had consequently much further to walk if they still wished to worship at Hillgate Chapel. It was to meet their case, and also that of the people round the school, that preaching services were begun in Brentnall Street in February, 1863. The resolution establishing such services was moved by Mr. William Lingard and seconded by Mr. William Axon. The need for preaching services in this part of the town was more fully recognised and met when the "Iron Chapel" was erected at the junction of Adswood Lane and Bramhall Lane in 1880. The present Trinity Chapel, which superseded the chapel

in Bramhall Lane, may be said to carry on the work inaugurated by the resolution of Mr. Lingard in 1863.

In the old school there was a feeling of familiarity among the teachers, officers, and scholars, which does not seem to obtain in many schools nowadays, unless it be in some village institution, where each member of the school seems to know the family history of his neighbour. When Mr. Bradley was superintendent some people used to speak of the school as being "Mr. Bradley's School." This was probably due to the fact that some of the teachers were employed at Messrs. Fernley & Bradley's mill, and the superintendent on the Sunday became the employer on the week-day. A remarkable story is told of how a labour dispute at the mill was settled in the Sunday school. Several of the women teachers were employed at the mill as weavers. In the course of their work they considered themselves justified in complaining of the quality of the yarn supplied to them. They interviewed the overlooker and the manager, but did not obtain from either an assurance that the grounds of their complaints would be removed. As a last resource they decided to see the owner of the mill. Surely Mr. Bradley, as their Sunday school superintendent, would order things to be remedied! But Mr. Bradley, unfortunately for the weavers, said that he could not interfere with the discretion of his manager. On the following Sunday all the teachers who were employed at the mill stayed away from school; and the Sunday after they were still absent. This was carrying the matter much further than Mr. Bradley desired; and it caused the greatest distress to Mr. Hooley, his fellow-superintendent. Teachers were difficult to obtain then, as now, and half-a-dozen could not stay away at one time without seriously hampering the work of the school. Accordingly, Mr. James Davenport, the secretary, was deputed to wait upon the discontented teachers, and ask them to return to their places in the school. This they consented to do, and appeared the Sunday after Mr. Davenport had visited them. When the scholars were about to go to their lessons, the secretary

said to the half-dozen teachers, "The superintendents wish to see you in the officers' room." Mr. Bradley and Mr. Hooley were in the room, and when the teachers were seated, Mr. Davenport announced the hymn,

" And are we yet alive,
And see each other's face? "

Prayer was then offered that God would guide them in the time of perplexity, and show them a way of settling their differences. Of course, this arrangement had been made beforehand, and one suspects Mr. Hooley's leadership in the matter. The result was that all in the room were convinced the way had been opened, and that prayer was answered. Mr. Bradley himself was very much affected, and the teachers not less so. The difficulties at the mill were speedily overcome! The incident illustrates the tremendous change which has taken place in the industrial world during the intervening years, for it is inconceivable that a modern labour trouble would be solved after such a fashion, even though the employer should be the superintendent.

In April, 1865, Mr. James Davenport was the prime mover in a scheme for the purchase of a harmonium for the use of the school. Up to then there had been an official tune-starter, and Mr. Davenport himself had most efficiently discharged this duty, which was to him a labour of love and source of great delight. The year before thanks were given to Mr. Enoch Unwin for the loan of his harmonium, and to Mr. John Unwin for playing it at the annual sermons. The improvement in the musical portion of the service must have been most marked, and Mr. Davenport was not slow to avail himself of the good impression thus created. A subscription list was opened for the purchase of a harmonium; Mr. Hooley headed the list with a guinea. Altogether about eighty subscribers raised seventeen pounds, and with this a serviceable instrument was bought, which did duty for many years.

Mr. William Richardson moved, in 1867, that a Penny Bank be established in connection with the school. This was opened in May, with a Committee composed of

Messrs. George Leah, George Brocklehurst, Robert Swann, James Howard, and Thomas Brandreth; and Messrs. William Lingard and Samuel Rigby as auditors.

A change took place in the superintendency in 1866, when Mr. Bradley retired, leaving Mr. Hooley in charge. Mr. Bradley and Mr. Hooley had been co-superintendents from 1860, Mr. Hooley at that time taking the place of Mr. William Heginbotham. Mr. Bradley had held the office for twenty-one years, having been first appointed in 1845, with Mr. Henry Hough as his colleague. One of the first acts of Mr. Hooley after his appointment was to institute the parents' party, which immediately became, and has continued to be, one of the most popular institutions of the school. The parents and guardians of the scholars were invited to partake of Mr. Hooley's hospitality; afterwards a meeting was held, during which addresses bearing on the work of the school were given by ministers, visitors of the school, and other friends, and there has usually been hymns and other pieces of music. What has made the parents' party so notable is, perhaps, the fact that it has always partaken of the character of a religious meeting, and not that of a mere entertainment. Mr. Hooley insisted upon a very high tone being preserved, and was intolerant of anything which militated against the standard which he himself set up. To-day, when Mr. Samuel Rigby generously continues the annual function which Mr. Hooley inaugurated, the same high level is maintained, and, even after the lapse of so many years, the Committee is exceedingly chary of introducing anything which, in the opinion of the members, would not coincide with Mr. Hooley's original intention.

Almost immediately after Mr. Hooley assumed the superintendency ideas began to take shape for the building of a new school. The time was certainly ripe for a forward movement. The old premises were out of date, and quite inadequate for the purpose of a Sunday school. When the building was erected in 1822 the intention of the trustees was to convert the cottages underneath one by one into classrooms as need arose. This had been done

in the case of one of the houses, but to what effect! Classes were receiving lessons in rooms which had been kitchens and bedrooms. The front room of the converted cottage was used by the first division of the Class of Honour of males, the second division making use of the kitchen. Mr. Thomas Brandreth, when teacher of the first division, was a firm upholder of discipline, and if a scholar refused to give attention he would be ordered from the room. To leave the school he would have to pass through the kitchen, where the second division were receiving a lesson, and his passage published his temporary disgrace. The problem of converting the remaining cottages into classrooms was a difficult one, for a scheme of alteration to make the rooms more suitable would have entailed very considerable expense, and there were those who considered it to be a wiser expenditure of money to promote a more ambitious scheme and build a new school—larger, and on a more convenient site.

There was another reason which impelled the workers to press for a new building, and that was the growing demand for education. There were many attending Brentnall Street School who were unable to read and write, and some of them were not young children. The officers had done what they could to remedy this defect by the provision of week-evening classes, but many, either through indifference or lack of opportunity, did not avail themselves of the facilities placed before them by the teachers. For some time in the 'sixties a day school on a small scale had been conducted in the old building by Mr. John Barlow, but it does not appear to have met with very great success. In 1864 the following Committee was appointed to conduct classes for boys and girls on Monday evenings in the large room of the school:—Messrs. Thomas Brandreth, William Lingard, Henry Finney, George Brocklehurst, James Davenport, and John Unwin. The Teachers' Meeting had passed a resolution that only boys who were able to write should be promoted into the class of honour. This acted as a stimulus to those who desired to reach the senior class of the school.

A lady who was a teacher in the school fifty years ago relates an incident which came under her own observation. At the time she was a scholar a girl sat beside her who was unable to read. When the time came during the lesson for the scholars to read a verse of Scripture, this person was prompted by those near her, and, although she stumbled considerably, as was only natural, she went through the form of reading her portion. Later on, the lady who tells the story was promoted to be a teacher. She was advanced step by step, until she was ultimately placed in charge of the class which she left as a scholar a few years before. The illiterate scholar was still there—and still unable to read! This was not an isolated case.

There is an incident which has been preserved in the memory of an old teacher which, while it has nothing to do with illiteracy, serves to show the class of scholar which had to be dealt with in the old school. On one occasion a teacher felt compelled to chastise one of his scholars for insolence. The boy was sent out of the school; but that only provided the opportunity for him to lay plans for revenge. When the teacher made his appearance in the street at the conclusion of afternoon school he was met by a volley of snowballs, which the expelled scholar had been busy preparing from the snow which lay thickly on the ground. Very soon the teacher's silk hat was rolling in the snow, and he himself pelted along the street by the young reprobate and his associates, until they thought their teacher's "crime" had been expiated.

The backward state of the scholars undoubtedly made a deep impression upon Mr. Hooley. Blessed with a good education himself, he desired that others might share in the same advantages. His chief concern was so to extend the work of the Sunday school that it should include a day school in the same building. Mr. Hooley was particularly keen in his desire for a day school. After much study the decision was arrived at that the old building could not possibly be adapted to day school purposes, and the only course open was to build a new school.

CHAPTER IV.

THE scheme for a new Sunday school was launched about the end of the year 1867, subscription lists opened, and many willing workers lent their aid in securing a building which would be worthy of the high purpose they had in view. Mr. Hooley purchased a freehold plot of land at the corner of Brentnall Street and Wellington Road. This plot, which was then used as a place for storing timber, he presented as a site for the intended school. He also gave a donation of £500 to the building fund, and the example he thus gave was not lost upon those who had set their minds upon the accomplishment of a self-imposed task. The first mention of the new school in the minute book is under date April 12, 1868, when Mr. William Richardson proposed that the surplus of the forthcoming "May Fair Tea Party" be devoted to the funds for the new school. The Band of Hope were also prominent with a tea meeting for the same object. The teachers and scholars were not slow to work for the new building, and they promised to raise the sum of five hundred pounds. Mr. John Unwin was appointed secretary to the effort of the teachers, and Mr. Samuel Rigby treasurer. This fund actually reached £514 before it was closed. Speaking at the celebration of his jubilee in connection with the school in June, 1911, Mr. Rigby said he had lively recollections of the subscriptions being brought in for the new school. The money was paid in Sunday by Sunday, and was very largely in copper. Mr. Rigby said he waited upon nearly all the shopkeepers in the neighbourhood, asking them to exchange the copper for money of less bulk. He became very well known to the local tradespeople, and they generally knew his business when he entered their shops.

The following were the first trustees of the new school:—



The present Brentnall Street School



The first Brentnall Street School

Mr. William Bradley	Mr. William Booth
„ J. Wilson Bayley	„ Francis Baker
„ John Sergeant	„ William Good
„ Henry Hough	„ William Axon
„ Arthur Smith	„ George Cussons
„ Thomas Bayley	„ John Barlow
„ Isaac Linney	„ Peter Scarlett
„ Alfred Parkes	„ J. O. Rigby
„ Samuel Bayley	„ John Unwin
„ John Harter	„ Samuel Rigby
Mr. William Hooley.	

Mr. Hooley was appointed treasurer to the trustees, and Mr. Thomas B. Moxon secretary.

The ceremony of laying the corner-stone of the present school took place on Thursday afternoon, July 2, 1868. The day had been looked forward to with much pleasure by hundreds of people who were or had been connected with the old school. Headed by the Volunteer Band, a procession composed of the scholars of Brentnall Street and Edgeley Schools, parents, trustees, members of the building committee, and gentlemen of prominence in the town, walked to the site. Here a large concourse of people had assembled. Among many others, there were present: the Mayor of Stockport (Mr. Henry Heginbotham), Rev. John Bedford (President of the Conference), Rev. Joseph Taylor, Rev. James Parkes, Rev. Jonathan Dent, Rev. J. Evans, Rev. Charles Garrett, Rev. A. Wilson, Rev. A. Clark, Rev. Joseph Pywell, Rev. J. Thornton, Rev. C. L. Fountain; Mr. E. W. Watkin, M.P., Mr. William Hooley, Major Coppock, Mr. E. Walmsley, Alderman Chapman, Mr. James Marshall, Dr. Turner, Dr. Peter Downs, Captain Fernley, Alderman Whitaker, Alderman Walthew; Councillors William Bradley, Smith, Preston, Harlow, Harrison, Baker, T. Bennett, W. R. Sidebottom; Messrs. J. Watkins Johnston, Alfred Parkes, H. Pearson, Thomas Bayley, John Wilson Bayley, George Cussons, John Brownhill, John Sergeant, Henry Hough, Robert Fernley, Thomas Jackson, Samuel Bayley, Joseph Farnworth, W. C. Fleming, Meginn, J. Whittaker, Peter

Scarlett, Arthur Smith, J. O. Rigby, Bassett, H. H. Parkes, John Bradock, James Heginbotham, J. W. B. Ambery, Joseph Faulkner, and Burgess. There were also present the architect, Mr. T. H. Allen; and the contractors, Messrs. T. and W. Meadows.

Mr. Thomas Bayley placed a bottle, containing newspapers and a few coins, in a cavity of the stone.

Mr. William Bradley then presented a trowel to Mr. Hooley, the superintendent, and Mr. T. Meadows, one of the contractors, asked Mr. Hooley's acceptance of a mallet. This having been done, Mr. Hooley proceeded to lay the corner-stone. He delivered a most vigorous address on the occasion, in which he contrasted the progress of the neighbourhood and people since the old school was built forty-six years before. He spoke of the political power which was then being granted to the labouring population, and said one of the ways to prevent abuse of that power was to educate the people. That was what they proposed to do in the school whose corner-stone they were that day laying.

Following the actual ceremony, Mr. John Wilson Bayley presented an address on vellum to Mr. William Bradley, who, as previously stated, had given up the place of senior superintendent to Mr. Hooley. The address read as follows:—

STOCKPORT SOUTH CIRCUIT.

To WILLIAM BRADLEY, Esq.

On this day, when the foundation stone of new Wesleyan Day and Sunday Schools, in Wellington Road South, was laid, the trustees, officers, and teachers of Brentnall Street School beg to offer to William Bradley, Esq., their affectionate and grateful thanks for his faithful, zealous, and successful services as treasurer of the trust estate for the last twenty-one years, and for his wise counsels, indefatigable labours, and cheerful liberality, as superintendent of the Sunday School during a similar period of time. They feel assured that, even in comparative retirement, the remainder of Mr. Bradley's life will not be spent in inactivity, but be still devoted to works of piety and usefulness, promoting the glory of God and the good of His Church. They devoutly wish him the choicest blessings of Heaven and earth; they pray that he may long be spared in health and vigour to enjoy the fruits of his diligence, and that in a blessed eternity he will receive a glorious reward.

July 2, 1868.

After a speech by the President of the Conference (the Rev. J. Bedford) a collection was taken, which realised £96.

In the evening of the same day over a thousand people sat down to tea in the Mechanics' Institute. It had been arranged to hold a public meeting in the same hall, but so great was the crowd that an adjournment had to be made to the large room of the Stockport Sunday School. Here the chair was occupied by Mr. E. W. Watkin, one of the Members of Parliament for the borough. Mr. Peter Scarlett, a teacher in the school, and the secretary to the Building Committee, presented the following report, which contains a concise statement of the scheme up to that time:—

The existing Wesleyan school, built in 1822, has for years past been found inadequate to the convenient and healthy accommodation of those attending it; and any extension of its operation, however desirable, has been altogether impossible for want of room. A day school, under the inspection of the Committee of Council on Education, has long been wished for in vain, the premises being altogether unfit for the purpose. The need for additional and more thorough educational efforts in this extending neighbourhood has year by year become increasingly urgent, whilst the unsuitableness of the old building has been more and more felt as a serious hindrance to the satisfactory working, and a bar to the healthy development of the School. After much careful consideration the friends of the institution came to the conclusion, in the autumn of 1867, that action in the matter could no longer wisely be deferred, and they resolved upon the erection of new buildings, which should provide for a Sunday School of six hundred children, a mixed day school of three hundred boys and girls, and an infant school of a hundred and fifty, with all needful conveniences, the cost of which, including land for site and playground, was estimated at about £3,600. A site was given by the superintendent of the Sunday School; the teachers and scholars undertook to raise among themselves and friends £500, towards which their own personal subscriptions already exceed £250; and the members of the congregation of Hillgate and Edgeley Chapels have promised £1,000. The committee appointed to carry out this scheme have hitherto purposely refrained from making any applications for subscriptions beyond their own immediate circle, being anxious that the results of their own efforts in the first instance should furnish a practical proof that they really feel the necessity of the undertaking, and a pledge for its successful realisation. They believe that they may now not unhopefully appeal for aid in raising the balance required, to the liberality of all in the town and neighbourhood who take a wise and generous interest in the cause of education. Of the value of the religious element in education it is unnecessary to offer any

remarks. The quality of the secular instruction to be given in the proposed schools will be doubtly guaranteed by the general high character of the masters sent out from the Westminster Training College, and by the strict regulations of Government inspection. The amount already collected and promised amounts to £2,640.

Other speakers at the meeting were the Mayor, the Rev. S. Romilly Hall, Mr. James Marshall, Mr. Edward Walmsley, Alderman Walthew, the Revs. James Parkes, Jonathan Dent, Charles Garrett, A. Clark, A. Wilson; and Messrs. Samuel Bayley, Thomas Bayley, William Bradley, and Alfred Parkes. It was announced that at the foundation-stone laying Mr. Hooley had contributed a further £50, Major Coppock and Captain Fernley £5 each; Mr. Watkin £10 and a promise of a further £50; the Mayor £5, Dr. Turner £5, Mr. Walmsley £5, and several sums from other friends.

It will probably be noticed that reference has been made to the new school being erected on "Wellington Road." Strictly speaking, the new school is not in Brentnall Street, but so great was the affection for the old name that it was decided to attach it to the new building, a fact which sometimes causes surprise to newcomers, who fail to understand why the name of a side street should be given to a building which stands upon the main road. But when the motive is properly appreciated, the sentiment which prompted a clinging to the old name is approved. However, in these later days, for circuit and Connexional purposes, the building is sometimes described as "Trinity Sunday School"; but, obviously, that has only been possible since Trinity Chapel was built.

The opening services of the present school were held on Thursday, May 27, 1869, when two sermons were preached in the large room, in the afternoon by the Rev. William Jackson, Governor of Didsbury College; and in the evening by the Rev. Alexander Wilson, B.A., pastor of Hanover Congregational Chapel, Stockport. The following Sunday the preachers were the Rev. W. B. Pope, Theological Tutor of Didsbury College, and the Rev. William Jessop, superintendent of the Tiviot Dale Circuit.

On the afternoon of the first Sunday's services the Rev. G. S. Hornby, of Mount Tabor New Connexion Chapel, spoke to the scholars and friends, and thus had the honour of giving the first address in the new school. Years afterwards Mr. Hornby was again stationed in his old circuit, and still exhibited the same brotherliness of spirit, being always ready to help other communions of Christians besides the one to which he belonged. In an advertisement in the *Stockport Advertiser* relating to the opening services, it was announced that on the Thursday and Sunday "tea would be provided in the *old school*, for the convenience of friends from a distance"; and these two functions probably marked the last public occasions on which the school was used.

There was a certain amount of sadness attached to the opening of the new school. A few days before Mr. Joseph Dale, one of the teachers, who was in business in Lower Hillgate, died suddenly, and his death militated against some, at any rate, entering into full enjoyment of the occasion. Mr. Dale had been looking forward with keen pleasure to taking part in the consummation of so many hopes and so much labour, but passed away before his joy could be realised.

There was much praise for the new school when the scholars entered into possession, but there was also great reluctance to leave the old building, uncomfortable as it undoubtedly had been. Its whitewashed classrooms and bare large room had a homeliness which had become familiar, and terms of endearment are used to-day, after the lapse of more than forty years, to describe the happy seasons spent in the school.

The old building was sold shortly afterwards, the purchasers being Messrs. Fernley & Bradley, the owners of the mill on the opposite side of the street, the premises thus remaining in Methodist hands. In the course of the next few years the mill and school came into possession of Messrs. T. & J. Smith, cotton doublers, and the firm decided to use the building as an addition to the mill. Preparations were made to fill the place with machinery.

This came to the knowledge of a lady who had been a scholar many years before, and she requested Messrs. Smith to let her have the chandelier which still remained fixed in the large room. Her request was granted. While the chandelier was being removed it fell from the hands of a workman, and was smashed to pieces, to the great regret of all concerned, and especially to the lady, who had hoped to have become the possessor of a memento of the former happy days.

The following is the list of officers and teachers when the new school was opened:—

Superintendent, Mr. WILLIAM HOOLEY.

Visitors:

Mr. William Cooper	Mr. Henry Mellor
„ William Richardson	„ William Axon
Mr. James Davenport.	

Secretary, Mr. SAMUEL RIGBY.

Teachers:

Mr. Thomas Brandreth	Mr. John Unwin
„ William Lingard	„ Peter Davenport
„ George Leah	„ Eli Llewellyn
„ Henry Finney	„ James Howard
„ George Cooper	„ James Bromley
„ George Brocklehurst	„ John Barrett
„ Abraham Lomas	„ William Leah
„ James Lingard	„ George Moores
„ Joseph Harter	„ William Finley
„ Robert Swann	„ Samuel Kitchen
„ John Daniel Rose	„ James Bourne

Mr. Thomas Brown.

Miss Mary Williamson	Miss Sarah Hill
„ Mary A. Hart	„ Dinah Bailey
Mrs. E. Walthew	„ Sarah H. Axon
„ Sarah Worsley	„ Jane Johnson
Miss Sarah E. Carrington	„ Ann Mellor
„ Elizabeth Marsland	„ Eliza Mason
„ Sarah Unwin	„ Elizabeth Ashworth
„ Ellen Barrett	„ Jane Garner
„ Emma Johnson	„ Mary E. Harter
Miss Hannah Unwin.	

The prevalence of the Christian name "William" among the officers of the school once led Mr. Hooley to make a joke at his own expense. He outlived all his colleagues who bore the same name as himself, and as he stood before a gathering of parents, when he himself was not far from the grave, he said that he was the last of the "Sweet Williams." After Mr. Hooley's death, twenty-four years elapsed before another William became a visitor. The last teacher elected in the old school was Mr. Thomas Brown, who is, happily, still living. He was appointed May 9, 1869, at the last Teachers' Meeting prior to the transfer to the new building. He afterwards removed to Denton, and on his subsequent return to his native town he again for a time associated himself with the work of the school. For a few years he acted as treasurer to the Sunday School Committee.

When the school had been opened a few weeks a canvass for new scholars was undertaken. To this end the neighbourhood was divided into districts, and Mr. Rigby and the teachers made a visitation of the homes. This system was also successful in obtaining scholars for the day school.

Two important changes took place in the *personnel* of the school when the new buildings were occupied. For twenty-one years Mr. James Davenport had discharged the duties of secretary, and by his regularity, punctuality, and geniality set an example to all with whom he was associated. He was now elected a visitor, and placed in charge of the Infants' Department, a position he retained until his death in November, 1889. When in health Mr. Davenport was always at school *before* the appointed time, and almost invariably stood at the front door to offer a kindly welcome to all. To one teacher, who usually had several of his family with him, his customary greeting was, "That's right, lad; always *bring* your children, don't *send* them." In his new position Mr. Davenport was essentially the right man in the right place, beloved alike by the young children under his charge and his colleagues on the teaching staff.

Mr. Davenport's successor in the secretaryship was Mr. Samuel Rigby, whose educational training fitted him for the proper discharge of the duties of the office. Mr. Rigby kept very full minutes of the Teachers' Meetings and other events which passed under his notice, and thus provided a mine of information to those who wish to study the records of the school's activities during the time he acted in the capacity of secretary. All his work was characterised by extreme care, both in the statement of facts and in the storing of the various books of his department—he generally knew where to find books or material he wanted; that is to say, if he had first handled them. Mr. Rigby was secretary until 1880, when he was appointed co-superintendent with Mr. Hooley.

The report for the first quarter in the present school showed that forty-seven new scholars joined, making the total on the books 504. The first teachers appointed after the transfer to the new building were Miss Sarah Ann Henzell and Miss Mary Ashworth. Soon after the school was opened there was a proposal to re-establish the night school which was in operation in the old building, and the following gentlemen were elected to work the scheme: Messrs. James Bourne, George Leah, John Unwin, James Davenport, and Samuel Rigby. Probably the fact that the young children were to be instructed during the week-day prompted the Sunday school workers to give instruction in the "Three R's" to those who had passed the usual day school age. The new day school was placed under a committee of management, of whom four of the number were to be nominated by the Sunday School Teachers' Meeting. The first nominees were: Messrs. William Lingard, Samuel Rigby, Thomas Brandreth, and William Axon.

In the October following the opening of the school the Band of Hope gave a concert and recital in aid of the funds of the new building. The Rev. John Rhodes was the chairman. The following programme of the event has been carefully preserved by one who was present:—

PROGRAMME.

Opening Hymn—"O Lord, our Guardian and our Stay"

Prayer.

Chairman's Address.

Glee—"Brighter days are dawning on our nation" ... BY THE CHOIR

Recitation—"The Snow Track" J. BOOTH

Glee—"Will that not joyful be?" BY THE CHOIR

Recitation—"A Brave Boy" W. H. FARRINGTON

Duet—"A little child lay dying"

Recitation—"Little Ella" E. HAMMOND

Glee—"The doctor is a nobler man" BY THE CHOIR

Recitation—"Coals of Fire" J. HALLWORTH

Hymn—"O Lord, to Thee we humbly pray"

Dialogue—"Liberty and Liquor-selling"

W. BROCKLEHURST & J. BOOTH

Recitation—"Trip to Llandudno" J. LAME

Glee—"We'll win the day come what there may" ... BY THE CHOIR

Solo—"Young ladies, pray listen to me"

Recitation—"The Horse and its Rider" SARAH LINGARD

Recitation—"A Voice from the Ranks" I. JOHNSON

Glee—"Home, home, well as we love thee" BY THE CHOIR

Recitation—"Our Drummer Boy" W. BROCKLEHURST

Glee—"I know a spot which oft I dreamed" BY THE CHOIR

Dialogue—"Sights at Sandford" A. LINGARD & M. WORSLEY

Glee—"Turn away, turn away from the bright drops that foam"

BY THE CHOIR

Recitation J. D. ROSE

Closing Hymn.

In 1870 we find a desire indicated on the part of the leaders at Hillgate Chapel to extend operations in the neighbourhood of the school, and a proposal was laid before the Teachers' Meeting that the school should be opened for public worship on Sunday mornings and evenings. The teachers, having considered the matter, the following resolution was adopted: "That the unanimous feeling of the teachers present in regard to the opening of the school for public worship on Sunday mornings is that it would very much interfere with the efficient working of the school. As regards the evening service they have no objection, but would give all the assistance necessary." It was subsequently decided not to proceed with the scheme for preaching in the school, but the application from the chapel shows that long before the "Iron Chapel" was erected in Bramhall Lane the thoughts of those responsible had turned in the direction of the south end of the town as the place for Methodist development.

There is a rather amusing entry in the minute book under date November 13, 1870. When the school was only twelve months old one of the teachers proposed that the desk, which was then placed at the Wellington Road end, should be fixed in the middle of the large room, on the left-hand side of the entrance. This plan was adopted as a trial. Since then the desk has been tried on each side of the school in turn, but it has generally reached its original position. The desk is now at the end overlooking the yard, and has probably remained a comparatively long time there owing to some of the furniture having to be cut and adjusted. Some of the elder teachers used to smile when a junior member of the Teachers' Meeting thought it would be a good thing to "move the desk"!

Mr. Thomas Brandreth was elected a visitor in August, 1870, following the lamented death of Mr. William Richardson. Mr. Richardson's removal was a great loss to the school. He was a good man, one of the finest characters ever associated with Brentnall Street. For twenty-six years he had discharged the onerous and honourable duties of visitor of the school, and by his devotion to the work and his general consistency of character, had won the respect and esteem of those who were employed in the same high calling on the Sabbath Day. Mr. Richardson died on June 18, 1870, and was buried at Marple, from which place he came to work at one of the Stockport mills many years before, along with his fellow-visitor, Mr. James Davenport.

Mr. Brandreth was teacher of the senior class of young men when he was promoted to the visitorship, and while the members of his class were gratified that he had been given a position of greater responsibility in the school, they were sincerely sorry to lose their teacher. They presented Mr. Brandreth with a large Bible, suitably inscribed, and signed by Mr. Joseph Hallworth as secretary of the class, expressing their appreciation of his services as teacher, and gratification that a way of further service to the school had been provided by his promotion. At

his death, thirty years later, this Bible was given by his widow to the Band of Hope, and is still in regular use at the meetings of that Society. Mr. Brandreth was always punctilious in regard to the proper discharge of the duties of the office.

In the autumn of 1872 a select class of girls was formed, and Mrs. Worsley was placed in charge. Many are the tales told of the wonderful times experienced in this class under the leadership of its devoted teacher. Her prayers were something to remember. It is related that when she prayed in public tears were seen to be flowing from the eyes of many of her hearers. Word was repeatedly sent upstairs to the superintendent not to expect the Select Class of Girls for the re-assembling of the school after lessons, as a "breakdown" had occurred, meaning thereby that some of the scholars had been so much impressed by the earnest pleading of the teacher that the impression created would have been lost if the routine of the school had been observed. The result of Mrs. Worsley's teaching was a large ingathering of young lives into the Church. Another feature of Mrs. Worsley's leadership was the healthy rivalry which developed between her class and the Young Men's Class, then led by Mr. Edwin King. In attendance, in the amount raised by collections, in the interest that each could generate in the Anniversary, the two classes vied with each other, and, it is scarcely necessary to add, the school was the gainer. Would that the modern young men and women, not only at Brentnall Street, but in every Sunday school in the land, showed the same interest and activity in helping to share the responsibility of maintaining and developing the work of Sabbath Day instruction!

At the same meeting which sanctioned the formation of the Select Class of Girls, Miss Sarah Ann Pickup was proposed as a teacher, and she also became a marvellous power among the girls. Her lessons were homely and pointed, and such as were calculated to have a lasting effect upon her hearers. Miss Pickup did not possess many educational advantages, and this fact might have

disturbed some sensitive natures if the superintendent had proposed a well-educated person as colleague. Many years afterwards the daughter of a superintendent minister, well educated, as may be expected, joined Miss Pickup in the work of teaching. This lady has since confessed, with gratitude, that the chief result of her association with Miss Pickup was her own spiritual improvement. Many of Miss Pickup's old scholars are active members of the Church to-day, and attribute their continued association with God's people to the ministry of their former teacher.

Two other notable lady teachers who were at work in the school in the early 'seventies were Miss M. Williamson, who had charge of the seventh class of girls; and Miss Heaton, daughter of the Rev. Joseph Heaton, superintendent minister. The latter lady joined the school in October, 1875, leaving on her father's removal from the circuit. For the last few years she has resided in London, and on the occasion of the celebration of the jubilee of four officers in 1911, she sent a letter of kindly remembrance to all those who had known her and worked with her years before.

When the school was opened the front was left in a somewhat rough state for some time. The task of collecting for the building had placed a great tax upon the energy of all concerned, and a breathing space had to be allowed. But not for long, however. In 1873 it was decided to finish the work begun five years before when the erection of the school was undertaken, and Mr. Samuel Rigby was appointed to solicit subscriptions in order that a wall and rails could be built round the school, and trees and shrubs planted in the ground thus enclosed. Mr. Rigby succeeded in raising £100 from the teachers, scholars, and other friends. Designs and estimates were obtained, and the following Committee appointed to carry out the scheme:—Messrs. Christopher Maw, Samuel Rigby, George Leah, John Unwin, Thomas Brandreth, James Bourne, James Howard, Joseph Booth, Thomas Brown, and John Dyas. The work was completed, and the finishing touches were thus put to the scheme. At a

teachers' tea meeting, held on December 14, 1874, a statement of accounts was presented by Mr. Rigby. The total cost of building, ironwork, and painting, and planting with shrubs and trees, amounted to £169 14s. The sum of £100 had been subscribed, and the difference of £69 was generously contributed by Mr. Hooley, who thus placed the school under another debt of gratitude.

In these days of freedom from convention, when young people have taken upon themselves to manage their own affairs to a large extent, it is instructive to read of the extreme cautiousness exhibited by those managing the school in its early career. Mr. Hooley was the superintendent, of course, and his permission had to be obtained before any rooms could be used during the week for a private class party. He was frequently compelled to be away from school on Sunday, for he was a great sufferer from ill-health. His absence necessitated a visit to his house when the use of a room was desired; and he was very particular to inquire from the applicant who was going to be present at the proposed party, how many were expected, and whether there would be any objection to a teacher or visitor being present.

Mr. Rigby was responsible for the introduction of the field treat into the school life. He proposed, in May, 1870, that the scholars be taken to a field in Bramhall on the following Whit Saturday, and there supplied with buns and milk free. This arrangement was carried out, and marked the beginning of many subsequent red-letter days in the lives of the scholars.

It seems rather remarkable that ladies were not generally included in Committee work for very many years in the school's history. This exclusion—or "lack of inclusion," which is not quite the same thing—has had another effect: the historian has no means of knowing from the minute book what special work was undertaken by the lady teachers in the early days. Very few ladies' names appear in the books dealing with the old school, except the date of appointment or leaving. But the record of successful teaching is not to be sought for in minute

books—it is rather to be found in the good lives of the scholars; lives which have been enriched and blessed by coming into contact with godly women, who may have had the oversight of a class when girls came to them at an impressionable age. Possibly this exclusion from Committee work was due not so much to design as to the fact that the ladies had not expressed any wish to be included in that capacity. The first intimation of ladies being so appointed is contained in a minute under date August 9, 1874. This was the occasion of the Library Tea Meeting, to be held the coming October. The following large Committee was chosen:—Messrs. John D. Rose, Joseph Harter, James Howard, Thomas Brown, Joseph Booth, Thomas Brandreth, George Leah, Henry Mellor, J. H. Hallowell, Samuel Hill, Misses Brownsword, M. Williamson, Bradbury, Mrs. Worsley, Misses Harter, M. Hill, E. Harter, S. Axon, S. A. Pickup, Hough, and Budd. If there had been any feeling before that their claims had been overlooked when committees were being selected, such complaint could not hold good on this occasion, for the gentler sex was certainly strongly represented.

A notable change in the arrangements for the Anniversary took place in 1875. From the commencement of Methodist Sunday Schools in Stockport, and previously at Wesley Street, the custom had been to charge an admission fee to the annual sermon. For weeks before the Anniversary the teachers were busy disposing of the tickets, and the proceeds from the sale provided a guaranteed income, whether the purchasers attended to hear the preacher or not. But there were those who maintained that it was not right to make a charge to hear the Gospel preached, and they moved to abolish the custom. On the other hand, many were fearful that if there was no charge the funds of the school would suffer to such an extent that the work would be seriously hindered. In 1872 the teachers held a tea meeting soon after the sermons to “consider the best means of raising the yearly collections so as to do without tickets for the annual sermons.” In

December, 1874, it was carried unanimously, on the proposition of Mr. Joseph Harter, seconded by Mr. John D. Rose, "that we have no tickets for forthcoming Anniversary." Tickets have not been used since. All fears of a decrease of income due to the change were set at rest at the sermons when the change took place. In February, 1874, when the Rev. T. B. Stevenson was the preacher, the total collection was £70 6s. 3d., of which £14 17s. was ticket money. At the following sermons, again preached by Mr. Stevenson, when tickets had been abolished, the collection was £71 10s. 2d. The advocates of the "open door" had reason, therefore, to feel justified in the course they had pursued.

The "School Sermons" have always been notable at Brentnall Street, in this respect not differing from any other school, which probably regards its own particular anniversary as a red-letter day to be looked forward to with keen anticipation, and looked back upon with satisfaction and thankfulness. In the old school, when times were not so prosperous and customs were more homely, there was a good deal of preparation of the schoolroom in readiness for sermon-day. Then, as now, it seemed necessary to pay a visit to the milliner or dress-maker, so that on the all-important day new hats and bonnets and dresses were worn, and added gaiety to the festive occasion. Many years ago one of the lady teachers went the night before the sermons to a shop at the bottom of Hillgate for a new bonnet, which was placed in a paper bag. The night was windy and wet, and the teacher well laden with parcels on her way home. When she arrived at her destination she found that, with the wind and rain, there was no bottom to the paper bag, and no bonnet!

Mr. Hooley never could entertain the idea that any teacher should be compelled to stay away from the sermons because of any lack of suitable attire. He made inquiries in a judicious way, and if there was any needy case he sought to remedy it. One of the lady teachers frequently acted as his almoner on these occasions, and

his strict injunction to her was never to mention to the recipients who their benefactor was.

The lists of preachers before 1831 have not been handed down to us, but in that year we have the record that the Rev. John Bowers was the special preacher, followed by Mr. John Repton, then by Squire Brooke, who was a most popular preacher throughout the Connexion. The Rev. W. L. Thornton, President of the Conference, was the preacher in 1842 and 1844. The Rev. Samuel Coley, the preacher with the wonderful illustrations, came in 1854 and 1856; followed by Rev. J. H. Rigg the year after, and also in 1864. The Rev. Thomas Bowman Stephenson occupied the pulpit in 1867, 1868, 1874, and 1875 (the year when admission tickets were abolished). On the day the present school was opened in May, 1869, the Rev. William Jackson was the preacher; and on the following Sunday the Rev. W. B. Pope delivered a powerful sermon. James Calvert, of Fiji, preached the annual sermon in 1871. The services of the circuit ministers in regard to the School Anniversary are quite as notable as the occasions when a "distinguished stranger" occupied the pulpit. The Revs. Joseph Heaton, J. T. Yeates, Timothy Moxon, J. Parkes, Jonathan Dent, Philip Fowler, Peter Budd, William Hunt, William Brookes, and T. W. Johnstone all preached the School Sermons while stationed in the circuit; and in one case the collection showed a considerable increase on the preceding year. It would be invidious to particularise more closely which year is indicated.

At the time Mr. Hooley became superintendent, one of the pleasures in the life of the young men of the school and chapel was the Mutual Improvement Society. In the work of this Society Mr. Hooley took a great interest, both from a personal and an official standpoint. An old handbill of a monthly public meeting held in 1866 has been preserved, and is instructive as showing the change which has come over the public taste in entertainments. The programme consisted of five pieces by the choir and four readings by members of the Society, which, with an

address by the president, composed the evening's entertainment. Those taking part were the president, the Rev. J. Dent, the Rev. J. Parkes, and Messrs. John Wilson Bayley, Edwin Hopwood, and T. B. Moxon. At the foot of the programme is the familiar name of Mr. J. N. Davenport, printer, who, years ago, did much of the printing for the Methodists of the South Circuit.

The president of the Mutual Improvement Society for 1872 was the Rev. Austin Davey, the vice-president Mr. John Dyas, and Mr. James Bourne secretary. The list of members for that year was as follows:—

Rev. A. Davey	P. T. Cooper
John Dyas	William Beech
James Bourne	R. P. Roberts
Edwin Slack	J. H. Hallowell
J. W. Smith	F. Smith
W. Ardern	T. W. Charter
E. R. Barker	R. M. Wright
John H. Good	Joseph Booth
G. H. Walker	T. Higham
J. Lamb	John Hill
G. Hammond	H. H. Lomax
I. Flitcroft	George Barrow
J. R. Roberts	Edward Thomas
Chris. Maw	W. Sutton
John Smith	J. B. Hadfield

Membership of the class was open to every young man connected with Methodism in Stockport. The meetings were held on Friday evenings in the large vestry of Hillgate Chapel, and extreme care was taken that a proper tone was preserved in the meetings. The rules provided the procedure should be for one meeting to be devoted to a careful reading and conversation on the Holy Scripture, and the following week a reading and discussion of essays. In 1874 Mr. John Good was elected secretary, and there was also in that year an addition to the membership of one or two men who, since then, have rendered notable service to the church and school. The members did not hide their light under a bushel, for we find that

early in 1872 a lecture in its behalf was delivered in the large room of the school by the Rev. A. Davey, on "Old England's Liberties, or the Struggles of our Fathers for the Protestant Faith." A month later the Rev. J. Thackeray, of Didsbury College, delivered another lecture on "New Light on Old Records." At this lecture the Mayor of Stockport (Mr. Thomas Bayley) took the chair. The Rev. A. Davey left Stockport at the Conference of 1874, and prior to his leaving the members of the Improvement Class presented him with "Chambers's Encyclopædia" in ten volumes, and "The Biblical Museum" in five volumes, as a token of regard to their president.

The society altered its name on several occasions. Its first title was "The Wesleyan Methodist Young Men's Improvement Class, Hillgate, Stockport." When the little "Iron Chapel" was opened in Bramhall Lane the name of "Trinity" became associated with the older one. Subsequently the title became "Brentnall Street and Trinity Wesleyan Mutual Improvement Society," and this remained until the Society was disbanded.

The high-water mark of prosperity was reached about the time of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, when there were nearly sixty members enrolled. Some of these have passed away, many have removed from the town, and only a few remain on the ground of their former oratorical triumphs. The full list of membership of that period is as follows:—

Mr. S. Rigby	Mr. J. W. Howe
Rev. W. Hunt	" W. Lowe
" W. Brookes	" Isaac Flitcroft
Mr. I. L. Leigh	" F. Fox
" H. A. Johnstone	" John Bennett
" A. Horsfall	" W. Hague
" T. Welch	" G. F. Leah
" J. Gibson	" F. Wilson
" C. Bainbridge	" W. Flanagan
" E. Hamlett	" E. Hazeldine
" W. Flitcroft	" J. Lomas
" G. E. Bouskill	" W. Lomas
" F. Dutton	" E. Pickford

Mr. E. Pickford	Mr. T. Rothwell
" T. Tomlinson	" —. Turner
" Geo. Bennett	" J. H. Booth
" J. Simcock	" James Harrop
" H. Leah	" D. Simcock
" J. T. Howe	" G. Bicks
" R. Mellor	" T. Brandreth
" Isaac Hill	" H. Heywood
" R. Rothwell	" James Charles
" E. Farrington	" Thos. Mottram
" E. Davenport	" W. Hargreaves
" J. Walker	" John Gennell
" J. A. Dearden	" John Ellis
" James Williamson	" Joseph Hallworth
" Joseph Williamson	

This was a most enthusiastic body of men, who took a great delight in the class, and proved their usefulness also in other branches of school work, the Band of Hope especially receiving a large share of their enterprise. The president was Mr. Rigby, Mr. E. Hamlett the secretary, and Mr. C. H. Bainbridge the treasurer. The acknowledged leader of the company was Mr. William Flanagan, who, in spite of an impediment in his speech, was a most skilful debater, and in true debating spirit frequently opposed himself to an essayist while cordially agreeing with all the essay contained. A debate was not complete without him; indeed, we are told that on one occasion no debate was held "owing to the absence of Mr. Flanagan." Other members developed elocutionary powers, and were frequently sought after. Among these were Mr. George Bennett and Mr. C. H. Bainbridge, the latter gentleman especially giving great pleasure by his recitals. The society came to an end about the year 1890, after having filled a useful purpose for nearly thirty years. Many of its members had been encouraged to exercise their gifts of speech, and thus later were able to render service to the church; and among the pleasantest memories some men cherish are the happy seasons spent in the "Young Men's Improvement Class."

There were many changes in the staff of the school during the first ten years in the new building. Death, the great reaper, claimed several. This was only natural, for those who had been mainstays were now reaching the allotted span of life, and the work they had begun or had sustained had to be taken up by younger and stronger hands. Mr. William Richardson, one of the visitors, was one of the first to depart, and his death and the consequent promotion of Mr. Thomas Brandreth to fill the vacant visitorship have been already noticed.

Mr. William Bradley passed away in 1874, and the same year saw the decease of Mr. William Axon, one of the visitors. Mr. Bradley retired from active participation in the work before the new school was built, but retained his interest in the institution to the end of his life. As mentioned on a previous page, he took a prominent part in the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the new school, and no one rejoiced more than he when the doors were opened for the first time. A very sympathetic letter was sent to Mrs. Bradley on the death of her husband, and her reply to Mr. Hooley expressed the high regard Mr. Bradley had for the school. In the course of an extended notice of the death of Mr. Bradley, the *Stockport Advertiser* of April 3, 1874, contained the following, among other particulars:—

The late Mr. Bradley was a class leader among his own body of religionists, and for twenty-five years he acted as superintendent of Brentnall Street School. On the death of Mr. Sergeant, he was appointed General Superintendent of the Sunday Schools of the circuit, a position to which he was re-elected only on Friday last. For thirty-seven years he was a total abstainer, and was long regarded as the leader of the temperance party in Stockport. In that capacity he laid the foundation stone of the Temperance Hall in St. Peter's Square, now the People's Opera House. His connection with municipal affairs extended over a period of twenty-five years. He was a member of both the first and the present School Boards; a committee man at the Infirmary and the Industrial Schools; and within the present year he was selected by the Conservative party, at the invitation of the Lord Chancellor, for the distinction of being made a Justice of the Peace for the borough. Whatever office he undertook, he always was most particular about discharging the duties and exceedingly punctual in keeping his engagements. Frequently he had expressed the wish that he might at one and the same time cease to work and live; and, strange to say, his wish has been realised,

the Higher Hillgate concern, which has been converted into a limited company, having been signed over last Saturday.

The funeral of Mr. Bradley took place on the Monday following (April 6) and was in the nature of a public ceremonial. A large assemblage gathered at the Sunday school—members of the Corporation, representatives from the School Board, Infirmary, and Industrial School, and a large number of Mr. Bradley's Wesleyan friends from the various chapels in the town. These joined in the procession to the Stockport Cemetery, where the remains of the former superintendent of the school were laid in a vault adjoining that of Mr. Joseph Mayer, the last surviving founder and father of Stockport Sunday School.

Mr. William Lingard was promoted from teaching to become a visitor in 1873. His appointment was the reward of years of patient, quiet work, which had been done in a way which commended itself to his colleagues. He was a staunch abstainer, and one of the founders of the Band of Hope in the school. His interests in this direction were not confined to the ordinary Band of Hope meeting on the week-evenings, but on the Sunday he frequently engaged in this class of work, especially by the distribution of temperance literature. For several years the health of Mr. Lingard was not good, and this necessitated occasional prolonged absence from the school—always to the regret of his fellow-workers. All Mr. Lingard's children were scholars in the school, and later became very valuable workers—his daughter (afterwards Mrs. Unwin) became a teacher, and later rendered conspicuous service at Hemphshaw Lane Mission School; his eldest son, Mr. John Lingard, became a teacher, then secretary of the school, organist, and one of the founders of the school choir; and Mr. Frank Lingard, another son, was a teacher, and secretary of the Band of Hope, in this latter capacity carrying on the work of his devoted father.

There were several appointments during the 'seventies of those who were destined to play a prominent part in the history of the school. Mr. Joseph Hallworth, who subsequently did excellent work as superintendent of the

Infant Room, became a teacher on November 13, 1870. Mr. Matthew Swindells, who, along with Mr. John Lingard, was one of the founders of the choir, was appointed a teacher in January, 1873; and in December of the same year Mr. Joseph Mellor, well remembered for his work as secretary, was elected a teacher.

Mr. Abraham Horsfall joined the school in March, 1874. He was not one who had been trained in the school from boyhood, as most of the officers and teachers of that time had been, but came as a man, with experience gained elsewhere—an experience which he gladly placed at the disposal of his new colleagues. His first work was to take charge of the “seventh-second” class of boys, with Mr. Joseph Harter as fellow-teacher. He was afterwards the teacher, along with Mr. James Howard, of the senior class of girls. His qualities marked him out for promotion, and in 1880 he was made a visitor, serving in that office for many years.

November 8, 1874, saw the appointment of Mr. Samuel Hill, who later succeeded Mr. Joseph Hallworth as superintendent of the Infant Room; Mr. Robert Mellor, who eventually was the teacher of the young men’s class; and Mr. J. H. Hallowell, who became one of the organists. Other notable appointments were those of Mr. Samuel Rhodes, in March, 1875; Mr. Joseph Stretch, in March, 1876; Mr. Frank Davenport, in March, 1876; Mr. Thomas Welch, in September, 1878; and Mr. Samuel Unwin, in January, 1879.



CHAPTER V.

TIME has changed many things in the school during the past few years. Methods and equipment pass out of date and are discarded; some of them, with strange irony, to reappear long after their former use had been forgotten. But the men and women who were in the school years ago, and who have passed beyond the veil, do not reappear with the systems they worked, though, we trust, the devotion shown by those bygone servants will be emulated by the teachers in each succeeding generation. These remarks are prompted by the examination of a programme of the officers' and teachers' annual tea meeting, held in May, 1877. The majority of those who spoke at that gathering have long since passed to their reward, and only one or two of the survivors have any connection with the school to-day. The following is the programme referred to:—

Opening Hymn 324.

Sunday School Report—Mr. S. Rigby (secretary).

Chairman's Address, Mr. W. Hooley.

Hymn 22.

Address by Rev. J. D. Brash.

„ Mr. Thomas Brandreth.

Hymn 51.

Address by Mr. William Cooper.

„ Mr. James O. Rigby.

„ Mr. Abraham Horsfall.

Hymn 76.

Address by Mr. James Howard.

„ Mr. William Lingard.

„ Mr. John Harter.

Hymn.

Address by Mr. James Bourne.

„ Mr. H. A. Johnstone.

Doxology.

Benediction.

The foregoing method of conducting the teachers' annual meeting is not now observed. The teachers' tea meeting has been merged in the parents' party, and the annual teachers'

meeting has altered its character altogether. There are no speeches now, save when a member is speaking to a motion, and the teachers themselves undertake much of the work formerly discharged by the Committee. Still, as one looks at the preceding list the old familiar voices may almost be heard, and the subjects discussed conjured up.

A very important and far-reaching decision was arrived at in 1878, when Mr. S. Rigby made application to the October Teachers' Meeting of that year for permission to begin a Junior Bible Class for boys of twelve to sixteen years. These classes were to be held on Monday evenings during the winter then ensuing. Permission was readily granted by the teachers. The class thus begun proved to be a most valuable agency for binding the youths together. Mr. Rigby threw himself heartily into the work, and the young people responded to the interest shown by the leader. The class continued for several years, and Mr. Rigby received many tokens of the regard in which he was held. One of his most valued possessions, and one which formerly occupied a place of honour on the wall of his drawing-room at Bramhall Mount is an illuminated address presented to him when the class was about to be wound up. There was the usual Bible lesson on the Monday evening, rambles in the country on Saturday afternoons, and each youth was encouraged to perform some handiwork, an exhibition being held periodically to show to admiring friends what the lads were capable of accomplishing. The work was a real pleasure, and to-day the former members of the class, after the lapse of many years, count it one of the joys of their life to have been associated with their leader and fellow-members in Mr. Rigby's Bible Class.

In 1881 the harmonium purchased some years before by subscription was considered to have performed its mission in life, and was superseded by the instrument which is still in use. Instead of opening a subscription list, as in the former purchase, the Sunday School Committee made a grant of £20. The Committee appointed



Mr. William Cooper



Mr. Thomas Welch



Mr. William Lingard



Mr. Thomas Brandreth



Mr. John Turner

to select and buy the instrument was Messrs. James Bourne, John H. Good, John H. Hallowell, and Mr. Arthur Bailey, organist at Hillgate Chapel, who frequently expressed his willingness to assist in the musical arrangements of the school.

The year 1880 marked many important changes in the history of the school. The health of several of the officers had been rather precarious for some time, and looking at the attendance register of that period, one sees the letter "s," denoting sickness, to the name of one or two visitors occurring frequently, instead of the usual attendance mark. Mr. Hooley was often absent. He was a great invalid, though a very patient one. During his absence Mr. Henry Mellor, as senior visitor, was called upon to act in the capacity of superintendent. It was felt, however, that, as there did not seem any prospect of Mr. Hooley's complete restoration to health, an appointment should be made which would give him relief by his sharing the executive authority with another and more vigorous man. To supersede Mr. Hooley entirely was not to be thought of for a single moment. His qualities as a Christian gentleman, and the generosity which he had lavished upon the school since its foundation, were quite sufficient to dispose of any such idea.

In the Committee Meeting, held April 30, 1880, Mr. Hooley himself moved, and Mr. James Davenport seconded, that Mr. Samuel Rigby be elected joint-superintendent with Mr. Hooley. This appointment was received with acclamation by the teachers, and unanimously confirmed. The choice of Mr. Rigby was an exceedingly happy one. During the nineteen years he had been in the school he had set a splendid example to others by his diligence and willingness to work for whatever he considered to be the best interests of the institution. For eleven years—that is, from the opening of the present school—he had acted as secretary, both of the Sunday school and of the Committee, and his work in that capacity was characterised by a carefulness and neatness which are commented upon even to-day. Now, he was

placed at the head of the school, for Mr. Hooley's continued ill-health only permitted of occasional visits, although no important changes were introduced or work undertaken without his knowledge. If he was too ill to come to school, he was able to listen, in his drawing-room at Heaviley, how the place was prospering; and he was made fully aware of all that was going on in the school. Mr. Rigby brought to his new work a warm and generous nature, an intense love for young folk, and a tact which welded the teachers together in a loyal band of workers. He was a great believer in the social intercourse of both scholars and teachers, and was able to gratify his desires in this direction. If a social function was contemplated and only lack of funds prevented its being held, that was no reason with Mr. Rigby why the enjoyment should be foregone. The necessary funds would be forthcoming. A fine feeling of comradeship was engendered among officers and teachers. It is merely repeating a truism to say that the more fellow-workers meet in social intercourse, the more the possibilities of misunderstanding are removed. Nothing delighted Mr. Rigby more than to see that his efforts were appreciated; even when he himself defrayed the entire cost of a gathering, he certainly seemed to be the happiest person in the company. Mr. Rigby's last report as secretary was presented to the annual teachers' meeting, held in May, 1880, and was in the following terms:—

In taking a review of the year's working of our Sunday School it is a cause of unfeigned thankfulness to God that in many particulars we can report a decided success in our important work, especially considering that so many of our children have been compelled to leave the town this year owing to the bad state of trade. It is a matter for devout gratitude to God that during the year we have had many conversions among the scholars, and ten have become members of Society. But we are far from being satisfied. During the year we have lost by death three of our elder scholars, all of whom had found peace with God. We labour in hope, remembering the promise, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Order and discipline have been well observed, so that we hope, by God's blessing, not only to maintain the efficiency of our Sabbath School, but soon to secure a larger measure of success.

The new secretary in succession to Mr. Rigby was Mr. Joseph Mellor, son of Mr. James Mellor, himself a teacher, and grandson of Mr. Joseph Mellor, mentioned in a previous chapter as a visitor and superintendent. Mr. Joseph Mellor, the younger, was brought to the school as a child, and, having gone through all the classes as a scholar, was promoted to teaching in December, 1873. In this he differed from the two previous secretaries, who came to the school as teachers. Mr. Mellor devoted himself assiduously to the duties of his new office. His attendance was exemplary; morning and afternoon he was at his post, and the work he undertook was well done. Those who knew Mr. Mellor in the early days of his secretaryship will always remember the Quarter-Day Service in which he generally took chief part—at any rate to the juvenile mind the most important part of the programme was when the secretary read the promotions. A duty which Mr. Mellor undertook was to marshal the procession to chapel on Sunday morning. This was no light matter, for three hundred boys and girls, marching from the school to Hillgate Chapel, required considerable attention, especially when some of the boys showed a proclivity for slipping from the procession into a convenient entry until the rest of the scholars had passed on, and then emerging, to play truant from chapel. Mr. Joseph Mellor's uncle, the late Mr. Henry Mellor, sometimes walked a distance behind the scholars, and rounded up those who had slipped away, to their no small discomfiture. Mr. Rigby, in addition to his duties as school secretary, had been secretary to the Sunday School Committee. This position was now filled by Mr. James Bourne, who retained it until 1886. In the latter year he retired, and Mr. Mellor was appointed to this office in addition to the one he already held.

There were two further notable appointments at the annual meeting which placed Mr. Rigby at the head of the school: these appointments were the election of Mr. Abraham Horsfall and Mr. Thomas Welch as visitors. Mr. Horsfall came to the school in 1874, and Mr. Welch

four years later. Both gentlemen were eminently suitable for the office to which they were called. Early in his career as an officer Mr. Horsfall set himself to pay strict attention to the visiting of the sick, be the sufferer teacher or scholar. Although his business as a commercial traveller in the provision trade was one which would betoken good health, Mr. Horsfall suffered very much during damp and foggy weather. Even this predisposition to breathing trouble on his own part did not deter Mr. Horsfall from attempting to give comfort where such was needed, and he was frequently seen on his errands of mercy when prudence demanded that he should have been by his own fireside. Mr. Horsfall was a most ardent temperance worker, and one of his first official acts after his appointment was to move that a Gospel temperance address be delivered in the large room one Sunday afternoon each quarter. He also was most exemplary in his attendance at school: morning and afternoon found him in his accustomed place, and only extraordinary occurrences kept him away. Mr. Thomas Welch was an insurance superintendent in the town, and before coming to Stockport had devoted many years to Sunday school work. He was a most sagacious counsellor, wise and kind, and beloved by the young folk. His addresses from the desk on Sunday afternoons are especially remembered. Rather deliberate in his delivery, with plenty of anecdotes such as are beloved by children, Mr. Welch's remarks always gained the attention of the scholars. The officers for 1880 were thus:—

Superintendents:

Mr. WILLIAM HOOLEY,

Mr. SAMUEL RIGBY.

Visitors:

Mr. W. Cooper

Mr. Henry Mellor

„ Thomas Brandreth

„ William Lingard

„ A. Horsfall

„ Thomas Welch

Infant Room: Mr. JAMES DAVENPORT.

School Secretary:

Mr. JOSEPH MELLOR.

Secretary to the Committee:

Mr. JAMES BOURNE.

Treasurer:

Mr. JOSEPH MOOR.

One more feature regarding the annual meeting of 1880 is worthy of notice. There was a deep affection on the part of the teachers for their aged colleague, Mr. William Cooper. It had become apparent that his hold on life had been relaxing for some time, and there was a strong desire to have a portrait of this good man to hang in the school. In the month of April Mr. Welch and Mr. James Bourne were the mover and seconder of a proposal that a portrait of Mr. Cooper be obtained and afterwards hung in the officers' room. This resolution was carried out by the following Committee: Messrs. S. Rigby, T. Welch, James Bourne, A. Horsfall, and James Howard; and at the annual meeting Mr. James Howard, on behalf of the teachers, presented the trustees with a beautiful portrait of Mr. Cooper, which was accepted by Mr. Hooley, and afterwards hung in the room intended by the subscribers. The portrait, still almost as fresh as the day it left the photographer's hands, has been on the wall now for more than thirty years, and, to the writer's certain knowledge, has often reminded those who have gazed upon it of the qualities of the departed saint.

The centenary of the establishment of Sunday schools was celebrated in 1880. Stockport was not behind other towns in holding in honour the man who, a hundred years before, had begun such a beneficent movement as that inaugurated by Robert Raikes. A meeting of Brentnall Street teachers was held on June 13, 1880, when Mr. Rigby gave a report of a preliminary meeting which had taken place in the old British School. At this teachers' meeting it was proposed by Mr. Joseph Booth, and seconded by Mr. Robert Mellor, that Brentnall Street should join with other schools in arranging a united

demonstration, and that Mr. Rigby should be the representative on the united Committee. It was also decided that the following gentlemen should be the local Committee for carrying out the arrangements which might be decided by the General Committee:—Messrs. Thomas Welch, Abraham Horsfall, Joseph Booth, James Bourne, Joseph Stretch, and Samuel Rhodes.

The centenary demonstration was held on Saturday, July 31, 1880. Brentnall Street scholars met at the school at half-past one, the procession leaving at two o'clock for the Fair Ground, Portwood, the place appointed for the general assembling of all the schools of the town. Each officer, teacher, and scholar wore a medal, presented by Mr. Rigby. The weather was everything that could be desired, and one of the essentials of success of an open-air fête was thereby assured. Having arrived at the Fair Ground, the proceedings opened with the singing of a hymn which had been written for the jubilee of the Sunday school movement fifty years before. The scholars then moved off along Avenue Street, Tiviot Dale, Heaton Lane, Wellington Road South, Edward Street, and Waterloo, to the fields in Churchgate belonging to the Rector of Stockport. Here, after the singing of several hymns, games were indulged in until dusk. There were thirty-four schools taking part in the demonstration, made up as follows:—Seven Wesleyan schools, seven Congregational, four Methodist New Connexion, Stockport Boys' Industrial School, three Primitive Methodist, the Independent Methodist, Lancashire Hill and Heaviley branches of the Stockport Sunday School, four Church of England, the Unitarian, Baptist, boys from Barnes's Home, and the girls from the Industrial School in Churchgate. The total number taking part in the demonstration would probably be about eight thousand.

During the next few years Death was very busy, and the school sustained losses with such rapidity that, in the minds of some people, the gaps then created seem to be still unfilled. The first to go was Mr. William Cooper, who passed away full of years and honour. It seems

that the view the teachers held when they decided to obtain Mr. Cooper's portrait was correct, for he only lived a few months after that event. The portrait was presented to the school in May, 1880; Mr. Cooper passed away on October 10 of the same year. For months he had been unwell, and his attendance at school was only intermittent. The last time he attended school was in July. On this particular Sunday Mr. Rigby was appointed to conclude. Mr. Cooper came and said, "I should like to conclude, Mr. Rigby, if you will allow me." And then, in a very broken voice, he announced the hymn, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." All were moved to tears, and the organist was so deeply affected that for a few moments he was unable to play the tune. Mr. Cooper told the scholars that was probably the last time he would address them. And such proved the case, for he never came again, and died, as stated, the following October, leaving the record of a beautiful, saintly life, and one of wonderful devotion to the school.

Following Mr. Cooper, Mr. William Lingard was the next to exchange service in the school for a higher service above. Mr. Lingard's health had been indifferent for years, but his love for the work of the school was constant, in spite of ill-health. His death occurred on January 10, 1881, and there was still another place to be occupied. A place to be *occupied* by another, perhaps, but vacancies thus created are not always *filled*. The new man brings new ideas, new methods, new personality—in fact, in many cases everything seems new, and the old worker, with all his characteristics, becomes a memory. Mr. Lingard occupied a distinguished place in the history of the school, and one has only to be in conversation for a few minutes with the contemporaries of Mr. Lingard to realise the permanence of the influence which his quiet, unostentatious life has left. In the memory of many that influence is to-day very clear, and only the last day will reveal how much the scholars have been indebted to such men as Mr. William Lingard.

Four years later both the school and Mr. Lingard's

family were called upon to suffer another serious loss in the death of Mr. Samuel Unwin, Mr. Lingard's son-in-law. With our limited human knowledge we may be inclined to think Mr. Unwin's death was premature, for he was little more than thirty years of age, and already had shown an aptitude for the work of the school which promised a career of increasing usefulness, had his life been spared. At the time of his death Mr. Unwin was one of the teachers of the Young Men's Senior Class, his colleague being Mr. J. J. Fairbourne.

Mr. William Hooley, the superintendent, passed away on Monday, November 24, 1884. As narrated in the following chapter, Mr. Hooley was largely instrumental in taking the initial steps towards building Trinity Chapel, though he died just as the scheme had been successfully launched. The following summary of the life of Mr. Hooley is extracted from the *Stockport Advertiser* of November 28, 1884:—

“ Mr. William Hooley, J.P., died at eight o'clock on Monday morning at The Limes, Heaviley. On Sunday night his relative, Mrs. Thomas Bayley, sat up with him, his state of health being such as to require close attention, but she left him about two o'clock on Monday morning without any fear that his end was nigh. Some six hours later, however, Mr. Hooley calmly passed away, and the town was thus deprived of one of its most respected citizens. He was the only son of the second marriage of the late Mr. John Hooley, hat manufacturer, of Heaviley. The family originally came from Pott Shrigley, near Macclesfield. At an early age, and during the period when Mr. Middleton was master, Mr. Hooley entered the Stockport Grammar School, and it was while at this school that the first indications of ill-health became apparent. An abscess formed in one of his legs, and this caused lameness, which lasted throughout his life. On account of his misfortune the Goldsmiths' Company allowed Mr. Hooley to stay at school longer than they would have done under ordinary circumstances; and he remained at the

school until he was seventeen years of age. After leaving school he was apprenticed as clerk in the Bank of Stockport. When he finished his apprenticeship he transferred his services to Messrs. I. and I. Bell, merchants, of Manchester. While with this firm he wrote a trade circular for them in three or four languages, and was also a contributor of a trade article to one of the Manchester daily papers. Several of Mr. Hooley's friends, who were shareholders of the Bank of Stockport, were anxious that he should return to the bank as manager; and in the end he accepted the offer. Under his management the bank was prosperous, and the business grew to such an extent that new premises became necessary. During the two years prior to his death Mr. Hooley was prevented by ill-health from taking his usual part in business."

The funeral of Mr. Hooley took place on the Friday following his death. The day was most depressingly wet. Magistrates, gentlemen of the borough, and friends from the chapel and school joined in procession to pay honour to the memory of the deceased gentleman. The service at the graveside was conducted by the Rev. William Lees, superintendent minister. On the following Sunday a sermon was preached by the Rev. William Jackson, Governor of Didsbury College, from the text, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short" (Heb. iv. 1). Speaking as a friend of twenty years' standing, Mr. Jackson said, at the close of his sermon: "Mr. Hooley was a great reader, a reader of good books. He kept himself thoroughly abreast of the time in his knowledge of the issues of the printing press, and he was familiar, too, with our best writers, both in prose and poetry. As he lived very much alone, and spent most of his evenings in his own house, he had rare opportunities for reading and study, and he turned those opportunities to good account, for he acquired a vast amount of general information on many subjects, and was emphatically a well-informed and intelligent man. He was a great lover

of nature. His knowledge of botany enabled him to see and appreciate beauties that were not seen and appreciated by the less cultured. He could literally revel in them. Our friend Mr. Hooley was not an ordinary man in point of intellectual power. He had a vigorous mind. He had a very ready perception of any subject presented to him in its varied bearings, and readily detected a flaw in the argument or a sophistry, and he had a very sound judgment on anything that he comprehended that made him a safe adviser and counsellor to those who sought his advice, so that many have greatly profited by his wisdom and intelligence."

Those who were accustomed to work with Mr. Hooley know that this eulogium does not flatter. Such was his influence and the respect shown to his character, that for fully twenty years after his death his name was frequently quoted in Teachers' Meetings, as though he still lived at The Limes. If a difficulty arose, it was no uncommon thing for a teacher to endeavour to obtain a decision of the meeting by saying that, if Mr. Hooley were alive, he possibly would incline to the view expressed by the speaker.

Two teachers joined the staff about the same time, who each, in his own way, exercised a good influence on the scholars. In January, 1882, Mr. Fred Wood became a fully-accredited teacher, and was appointed to the Sixth Class of boys. This, and the corresponding class of girls, soon became the great attraction on Quarter Days. Mr. Wood's colleagues were Mr. Matthew Swindells and Mr. Robert Mellor. All three gentlemen were great lovers of music, and during the quarter the boys and girls assembled together on several Sunday afternoons, when they were trained to sing a hymn. The girls sang treble, most of the boys sang alto, Mr. Wood tenor, and Mr. Mellor and Mr. Swindells bass. The singing of the Sixth Class was always a treat, and the large number of parents who regularly came on Quarter Days were undoubtedly attracted by the singing of the class. The writer par-

ticularly remembers the profound impression created on one of these occasions by the two classes singing—

Hark ! hark, my soul ! angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore.

The music that Sunday afternoon was soul-stirring, and left an abiding impression upon those who were privileged to hear it. Years afterwards one of the girl singers was heard humming this particular tune, and, when questioned, said she had never forgotten it; and through many years it had been an inspiration to her. At the time under notice the school choir had not been established, though it was not long after that proposals were made to inaugurate such a useful help to the worship of the school; and the great musical success of the children of the Sixth Classes undoubtedly had much to do towards creating a desire for a good lead in the service of praise.

The other teacher who was introduced to the school about the same time as Mr. Wood was Mr. J. J. Fairbourne, who had been appointed editor of one of the Stockport newspapers. In May, 1883, Mr. Fairbourne was placed in charge of the senior class of young men. He was one of the first teachers who advocated a change in the method of governing the school. Mr. Fairbourne urged that the institution should be managed more directly by the Teachers' Meeting than was then the custom. The governing authority at that time was vested in the Committee, and the teachers had very little voice in the actual management. What seemed impossible, however, when Mr. Fairbourne first came to the school, has now been achieved almost without effort, for the present Sunday School Council, which is composed of officers, teachers, and elected representatives, has full control of all the interests of the school, and the Sunday School Committee has been entirely superseded.

Mr. Fairbourne was greatly beloved by members of his class. A noticeable feature was the large Sunday morning attendance, and if we were dealing with the young men of to-day we should say the fact of a large class of young fellows assembling at nine o'clock on

Sunday morning for a Bible lesson was sure evidence of the popularity of the teacher. But, making allowance for the greater relish which young men of thirty years ago had for the Sunday school, one is much impressed by the steady attendance on consecutive Sunday mornings of scholars who delighted to listen to the exposition of the Word of God by Mr. Fairbourne. His morning lessons were generally a series of meditations on selected portions of the Bible, and, in spite of an impediment in his speech, his hearers always heard him with great profit. It was Mr. Fairbourne's custom to occasionally call upon members of his class to give out a hymn, or lead in prayer, and in this way several of them developed into speakers, and later became teachers, or occupied other public positions where they had not to go through the ordeal of hearing themselves speak for the first time in the presence of their fellows. The encouragement the teacher thus afforded to his scholars was, apparently, only a trivial service, but there has been an abundant return for the labour expended. Mr. Fairbourne took a great interest in the Mutual Improvement Society, and was frequently at its meetings. After serving the school with much acceptance for some years, business changes compelled his removal from Stockport. He died in 1913, at Heaton Park, Manchester.

The year 1882 saw the establishment of the Juvenile Missionary Society in connection with the school. The first meeting was held on Sunday, October 8, 1882, when Mr. William Hooley presided. The speakers included Mr. H. A. Johnstone, Mr. Thomas Welch, the Rev. Richard Middleton (the junior minister of the circuit), and two students from Didsbury College. The collection realised £5. The following year Mr. Rigby presided, Mr. James Bourne (who had been appointed secretary) read the report, and addresses were given by the Rev. A. S. Geden, Mr. Hooley, Mr. J. W. Clarke, and Mr. H. A. Johnstone. Subsequently the secretaryship was undertaken by Mr. Joseph Hallworth, and then Mr. James Harrop. During Mr. Harrop's term of office Mr. Robert Rothwell and

Mr. William Swindells, who were then scholars in the Senior Class, delivered their first addresses to the scholars in the large room. This was on Sunday, January 24, 1892, and the occasion the half-yearly meeting of the Juvenile Missionary Society. The selection of scholars as speakers was due to the initiation of Mr. Fairbourne, who undertook to get two members of his class to impart an element of novelty to the meeting if only by reason of the speakers' youth. Mr. T. Welch was in the chair, and Mr. Isaac Linney Leigh and Mr. Thomas Rowbotham were the "experienced" speakers. Mr. Rothwell spoke on "South Africa," and Mr. Swindells on "India." The meeting was a very good one. The scholars were wonderfully sympathetic to those who were trying their gifts of oratory for the first time, and the words of encouragement after the meeting from Mr. Fairbourne and others provided an incentive to go forward and persevere. Some years ago Mr. Rothwell left Stockport to live at St. Helens, and has fulfilled the promise of usefulness made in early manhood, although, unfortunately, the state of his health has not permitted his undertaking the amount of work which his willing mind desired.

In the lives of all Brentnall Street scholars some days must stand out more clearly than others, especially the days of early childhood. One of these red-letter days is surely the visit paid to Bramhall Grange Farm, so kindly placed at the disposal of the school officials by Mr. Fallows. Year after year, for a generation, the scholars have marched in procession along Bramhall Lane to the farm, and invariably Mr. Fallows has stood, smiling, at the entrance to the field to welcome his young friends. When the field treat was first introduced visits were paid to Castle Farm, Mile End Lane, then in the occupation of Mr. Horsfall. The route to the latter field was much more rural thirty years ago than is now the case. At that time Buxton Road was not fully built upon. The site of the present St. George's Church and School was used as a grazing ground for cattle, and here on Saturday afternoons Brentnall Street Football Club played

their games. Further up the road were other fields and open spaces. Mile End Lane was a quiet country road, and the ground where the children disported themselves seemed miles away from a busy town. In the summer of 1884, while proceeding along Heaviley, on the way to the field, the scholars halted at the house of Mr. Hooley, the superintendent, who lay very seriously ill. Many of the scholars stood inside the garden rails, and round the doorway. After the singing of a hymn—probably the last Mr. Hooley ever heard the scholars sing—the procession moved on its journey. In 1886, Mr. Horsfall having given up the tenancy of the Castle Farm, the scholars visited Mr. Fallows's farm, and since that time, up to 1913, when he removed from the district, this genial friend of the children placed the school under a debt of gratitude by annually providing a field for the children's treat. In this neighbourhood, also, bricks and mortar are rapidly taking the place of open fields, a railway has made its appearance, and before long men and women who are now middle-aged will look in vain for the fields where they played as children. They will probably find new villas, surrounded by prim gardens, beautiful to look upon, doubtless, but bringing back no memories of happy Saturday afternoons of long ago.



CHAPTER VI.

FOR some years prior to 1880 there was a feeling in the South Circuit that something would have to be done to meet the needs of the congregation worshipping at Hillgate Chapel. That district had deteriorated, and Methodists, along with other people, were fast migrating to the outskirts of the town. Hillgate was not very desirable for a place of worship. As mentioned in a previous chapter, the south end of Stockport offered the most favourable field for the development of Methodism. Many members of the Methodist Society and congregation resided in the Heaviley district, and means were sought for the building of a place of worship in that locality. Accordingly, in 1880, a wood and iron chapel was erected at the junction of Adswood Lane East and Bramhall Lane, on the site now occupied by the Co-operative Stores. The hopes of the promoters were rapidly fulfilled; in fact, the success of the scheme greatly exceeded the most sanguine expectations. The little place, which was named Trinity Chapel, from the first was popularly called "The Iron Chapel." It was situated in a pleasant locality. Trees surrounded the grounds, there were open fields at the side, and Bramhall Lane contained very few houses. The writer especially remembers the beautiful wild pansies which grew in great profusion all round the chapel. The interior of the little chapel was plain, with varnished pine pews, and no elaborate decoration. But the whole atmosphere was so homely and the service so attractive, that there was no surprise when the chapel was rapidly filled.

While the success of the "Iron Chapel" was gratifying to those who had been instrumental in securing its erection, the success proved embarrassing to those who were charged with the upkeep of the mother chapel. Many of those who are sometimes described as being

"comfortably off" had transferred their attendance from Hillgate Chapel to the one in Bramhall Lane, and, of course, their financial support was given to the latter place. There had been a decline in membership of Society at Hillgate for some years. That decline was accelerated when the new chapel was opened. In 1884 the matter was resolutely faced, and a meeting called by the superintendent minister to consider how the decline could be arrested, and the means to be adopted to promote the interests of Methodism in this part of the Circuit.

This momentous meeting was held in the Lecture Room of Brentnall Street School on March 21, 1884. There were present the Revs. John Shipham and William Lees, and Messrs. Thomas Bayley, William Hooley, George Cussons, J. Moor, J. Bradock, William Good, J. Clark, Thomas Welch, W. J. Twyford, Alfred Parkes, Isaac Linney Leigh, Robert Stockdale, Abraham Horsfall, John Turner, H. A. Johnstone, and Dr. Turner. Mr. Thomas Bayley having laid a scheme before the meeting, it was resolved, on the motion of Mr. Leigh, seconded by Mr. Twyford, "that it was desirable to erect a new circuit chapel in place of Hillgate and Bramhall Lane Chapels." From this resolution sprang the present Trinity Chapel in Wellington Road South.

A tea meeting of the friends connected with Hillgate and Bramhall Lane Chapels was held on April 3, 1884, in the large room of the school, the object being to consider the resolution just quoted. A large number of people were present at the meeting. After tea the chair was taken by the Rev. John Shipham, the superintendent minister, who was supported by his two colleagues, the Rev. William Lees and the Rev. Richard Middleton; Mr. Thomas Bayley, Mr. Alfred Parkes, Mr. George Cussons, Mr. Isaac Linney Leigh, Mr. Samuel Rigby; and Mr. Joseph Moor and Mr. H. A. Johnstone, the two latter gentlemen having been appointed secretaries.

Mr. Johnstone presented a summary of the proceedings which had led up to that meeting. He said the



Trinity Wesleyan Chapel



Hillgate Wesleyan Chapel (now the Central Hall)

meeting held at Brentnall Street on March 21 was the outcome of a conference with Mr. Thomas Bayley and Mr. William Hooley. At the interview it was mentioned that £7,000 would be the approximate cost of a new chapel, including the price of the land. The site proposed was at Wellington Road (Brown's timber yard). If the chapel were erected at that point, the school and chapel would become practically one interest. The trustees of Hillgate had decided to sell that edifice, and it was hoped that the trustees of Bramhall Lane Chapel would follow the example.

The chairman spoke of the veneration which many of those present must have felt for old Hillgate Chapel. It had seen splendid work done in the past; but he thought that, as many of the congregation were moving further from the centre of the town, it was necessary to build a chapel which would be more convenient to reach. Mr. Shipham gave utterance to sentiments in the course of his speech which cannot be over-emphasised even to-day. He said: "It was a matter of the greatest importance to the Church that they should have a chapel nearer to the large and excellent Sunday school where they were that night assembled. The chapel and Sunday school should be fused as far as possible into one grand religious institution. At present it was all but impossible to go from Brentnall Street to Hillgate for about six months of the year. They wanted a chapel to which the children could go in all weathers."

Mr. Thomas Bayley proposed "That this meeting approves of the scheme laid before the meeting on March 21, and pledges itself to carry the same to a successful issue." He said he would start the subscription list with £500 for himself and his wife. The chairman said that Mr. William Hooley had hoped to be present to second the resolution, but the state of his health prevented his attending. He sent a promise of £500 towards the new chapel. The resolution was seconded by Mr. Samuel Rigby, who promised £250.

Mr. Isaac Linney Leigh spoke for the trustees of

Bramhall Lane Chapel, and said that while it would cause a considerable wrench to leave the place, still they were prepared to do all they could to help forward the scheme. Mr. Leigh said the great reason he had for seeing the new chapel erected was that there might be a home provided for the young people attending Brentnall Street Sunday School. At Hillgate, during the preceding eight years, the numbers meeting in Society had gone down from 261 to 153. Mr. Leigh said he was very much concerned that, while there were 650 children in the school, there had been such a serious decrease in membership. Other speakers included Mr. Alfred Parkes, Mr. George Cussons, Mr. Edwin Hopwood, Mr. Joseph Moor, and Councillor John Turner.

During the evening slips of paper were distributed, which were afterwards returned to the platform with promises towards the new scheme. When the various amounts had been totalled, it was found that two thousand pounds had been promised in the room, and that, placing a legacy left by the late Mrs. Lomax to this amount, and what was likely to be realised by the sale of Hillgate and Bramhall Lane Chapels, a little over half the sum required had been realised. This announcement was received with much gratification.

Mr. H. A. Johnstone attended a special teachers' meeting held at the school on April 20, 1884, when he laid before the members the proposals for the erection of a new chapel, and solicited the aid of the school in raising the necessary money. The teachers promised to raise £250, and the following Committee was appointed to carry out the fulfilment of the promise:—

Mr. A. HORSFALL, *Treasurer*.

Mr. S. UNWIN, *Secretary*.

Mr. J. J. Fairbourne	Miss E. P. Taylor
„ Joseph Hallworth	„ J. M. Taylor
„ Robert Mellor	„ Ardern
„ Frederick Wood	„ Axon
„ Peter Davenport	Mrs. Townley
„ Samuel Rhodes	„ Harrop

At a later meeting, owing to the serious illness of Mr. Samuel Unwin, Mr. Frank Davenport was appointed assistant secretary to the Committee.

The foundation-stones of the present Trinity Chapel were laid on Thursday, November 6, 1884. At half-past two there was a gathering in Hillgate Chapel of trustees, friends, and scholars of Brentnall Street School. A procession was formed, and, headed by the band of the Barnes's Home, a move was made to the site on Wellington Road. There a large concourse of people had assembled. After the singing of the hymn "O Lord of hosts, Whose glory fills," Mr. William Good, the oldest trustee, was called upon to place a bottle containing the usual documents in a cavity of the stone. Mr. Thomas Bayley laid the first stone, after which function he said that it had long been wished to erect a new chapel near to Brentnall Street School in order that the school and chapel might work in harmony with each other. The second stone should have been placed in position by Mr. William Hooley, but he was too ill to be present, and Mrs. Thomas Bayley acted as his substitute. The third stone was laid by Mr. Samuel Rigby. Addressing the company, Mr. H. A. Johnstone (who presented a silver trowel to Mr. Rigby) said: "When it is remembered that the teachers and scholars of Brentnall Street Sunday School had been second to none in the enthusiastic energy with which they had gone into this business of chapel-building; when it was remembered that they were not only going to provide a stall for the bazaar to be held the following spring, but were going to raise amongst themselves £250 towards the erection of that sanctuary; when it is seen that they so largely prevail in this congregation, and are the manifest fruits of efforts for good in the town, it is appropriate that a stone should be laid on their behalf, and no better man could have been selected for the purpose than the excellent superintendent of the Sunday school."

Mr. Rigby said he had great pleasure in telling the audience that the teachers and scholars of the Sunday school were in perfect sympathy with the project, and he

believed that when the interests of the Church and Sunday school were brought together they would be one. Mr. Bayley, Mrs. Bayley (on behalf of Mr. Hooley), and Mr. Rigby each placed £100 upon the stone they laid, and Mr. Rigby placed a further sum of £50 on behalf of his mother.

The subsequent proceedings had to be held in the school whither the friends were compelled to resort on account of the rain. The proceedings were conducted by the Rev. William Lees (who had succeeded the Rev. John Shipham as superintendent minister). A fine address was given by the Rev. Dr. Pope.

In the evening of the same day a great tea meeting was held in the Volunteer Armoury. A local newspaper said that twelve hundred people sat down to tea. After tea the chair was taken by Mr. Thomas Bayley, who said that the scheme for the erection of a new chapel had only been in existence for six or seven months, but he thought it had grown into vigorous life.

Mr. H. A. Johnstone read a statement, from which it appeared that £68 7s. had been realised by trays. The teachers and scholars of the Sunday school had not only promised a stall at the forthcoming bazaar, but had undertaken to raise £250 towards the cost of the new chapel. They had already collected £52 9s. 1d., while there had been laid on the stones that day by the boys £14 4s. 5d., and by the girls £13 11s. 5d., or a total of £80 5s. towards the £250 promised. The sum of £100 had been received from the Chapel Committee, the amount at the stone-laying had been £395 15s. 9d., and with £50 promised by Mr. James Leigh (who should have presided at that meeting) and promises and contributions, they had no less than £3,985 towards the £7,000 required. The united choirs of Hillgate and Bramhall Lane Chapels had resolved to raise £50 by a series of concerts, and they wished the proceeds of their efforts to be placed to the organ fund.

The opening services of the new chapel were held in January, 1886, when the special preachers were the Revs. Robert Newton Young, F. Greeves, F. W. Macdonald, J. Colwell, Richard Roberts, C. H. Kelly, and R. Morton ;

and, together with preparatory services by the Revs. Mark Guy Pearse and Charles Garrett, realised £500. The bazaar referred to by Mr. Johnstone was subsequently held, and resulted in a net profit of over £1,000. The gift of an organ by Mr. Thomas Bayley, and the purchase of a minister's house, marked the conclusion of a most successful scheme, and one in which the Sunday school played a not inconsiderable part.

It may possibly have been noticed that nearly every speaker repeated the sentiment that the building of the new chapel would be the means of bringing chapel and school together. This did not mean merely that the two buildings would be in closer proximity to each other than were Hillgate and Brentnall Street; but that there was to be a unity of purpose and a community of interest among the congregation at the chapel and the scholars in the school which were absent when the two buildings were a mile or more apart.

The Sunday afternoon service at the Anniversary, which is now looked upon as a children's festival, was introduced in 1886, after the opening of Trinity Chapel. There was a recommendation made by the teachers' meeting in September, 1883, that a children's service should be held at the forthcoming sermons. The suggestion was that the morning service should be held in Hillgate Chapel, the evening service in Bramhall Lane Chapel, and the children's service in the school in the afternoon. The proposal as regards the afternoon service was repeated the following year on the proposition of Mr. Joseph Stretch, and was adopted. The succeeding year, Trinity having been opened, the service in the afternoon was held in the chapel, and the arrangement then entered into has continued up to the present time. At the first service Mr. Arthur Bayley, the late lamented organist at the chapel, had charge of the music. During the intervening years it has been a pleasure to notice the interest former scholars have taken in joining the present scholars in this great school festival.

In common with almost every Methodist community,

Brentnall Street School has always had at least one in its midst who possessed a great love for singing. Methodism itself was born in song, and the ability to express almost every experience of life in musical terms soon became one of the distinguishing features of the two Wesleys.

The music of Brentnall Street seemed to take on new importance with the advent of Mr. James Davenport. Prior to that time there is little mention in the minute books of any special musical preparation for the annual sermons. In January, 1849, Mr. Davenport was appointed to conduct the singing for the Anniversary, and from that day until death removed him he took a prominent part in all that concerned the service of praise. At the time under notice there was no musical instrument in the school, and Mr. Davenport was appointed precentor, or "hymn-starter." There was a broad aisle down the middle of the old school, and as the hymn was given out, Mr. Davenport walked down the aisle, singing the tune, and beating time, holding a large hymn-book in hand. When books were scarce, and few scholars able to read, it was customary for the person in the desk to dictate the hymn two lines at a time, and in that way hymns were sung—two lines, and then rest. The two last lines of the hymn were repeated, and it was considered a great innovation when, one Sunday, Mr. Hooley, the superintendent, announced that the last verse would be finished without the usual repetition. As illustrating Mr. Davenport's versatility, it was his proud boast that on one Sunday, at the school and at Hillgate Chapel prayer-meeting, he had started no fewer than twenty-nine tunes, each one different. He began that particular Sunday with an early-morning prayer-meeting at the school, and finished the day with a prayer-meeting at the chapel. Frequently he would stop a friend in the street with the remark, "How did you like that tune we had in the chapel on Sunday?" If the friend said that he did not happen to have been present at worship when the tune in question was sung, Mr. Davenport would say, "It went like this—," and would sing quite loudly to explain what he meant—to the no small

embarrassment of his friend and the amusement of the passers-by!

At the annual sermons of 1865 Mr. John Unwin led the singing on a harmonium, which had been lent to the school by his father, Mr. Enoch Unwin. This experiment was so satisfactory that at the next teachers' meeting Mr. Davenport proposed that a harmonium be purchased by the school. The cost of the instrument—£17—was raised by a subscription among the teachers and senior scholars, and after doing duty for about twenty years this harmonium was given to the Band of Hope, and the instrument now in use purchased in its stead. Following the opening of the present school, Mr. H. A. Johnstone was associated with Mr. Davenport for about ten years in the preparation of the musical portion of the Anniversary services, and received the special thanks of the teachers for the efforts he put forth. In subsequent years the selection of hymns was undertaken by Mr. Arthur Bayley, organist at the chapel, Mr. Fred Wood, and others. The organists who have officiated since the purchase of the harmonium have been Messrs. John Unwin, John H. Hollowell, J. H. Good, Thomas Hill, Joseph Mellor, John Lingard, and the present organist, Mr. James H. Hallworth, who has occupied the position for several years.

In the early part of 1888 the formation of a school choir was brought before the teachers' meeting. The singing of the Sixth Classes was undoubtedly a great factor in influencing the teachers to receive the proposal favourably. It was felt that this would be one means of conserving the enthusiasm then exhibited by the scholars. In pursuance of the proposal to form a choir, Messrs. Matthew Swindells and John Lingard were deputed to visit Edgeley School, where a choir was already established, and make a report at a subsequent teachers' meeting. The delegates gave a favourable account of their Edgeley visit, and at the monthly teachers' meeting in July, 1888, it was resolved "that a choir be formed from the scholars, and that Mr. M. Swindells be appointed leader." Singular to say, there were some who did not

fully approve of the proposed arrangement. Those who had been used to Sunday school without such an organisation as a choir felt some difficulty in accepting what, to them, seemed a revolutionary proposal. The step then taken was abundantly justified by the success which attended the efforts of the singers to improve the musical portion of the service. Mr. John Lingard was appointed organist, and continued to discharge the duties of the office for several years with very great acceptance. The following were the members of the first choir:—

Conductor, Mr. MATTHEW SWINDELLS.

Organist, Mr. JOHN LINGARD.

Treble—

Miss Sarah Albiston
 „ Clara Dudson
 „ Elizabeth Walker
 „ Edith Dudson
 „ Edith Bayley
 „ Gertrude Bowlas
 „ Sarah Holland
 „ Alice Pearson
 „ Elizabeth Lees

Alto—

Miss Alice Dudson
 „ Minnie Brown
 „ Jane Brierley
 Master Fred Swindells

Tenor—

Mr. E. Hazeldine
 „ Isaac Hill
 „ Alfred Bennett
 „ William Hague
 „ William Swindells

Bass—

Mr. Herbert Johnson
 „ John Lomas
 „ Joseph Williamson

The writer has not been able to find either a written or printed list of the first members of the choir, and has had to rely upon his memory for the above names. He apologises to any whose names may be omitted.

After about three months' diligent practice the choir took their places in the large room, and on the September Quarter-Day of 1888 gave their first piece—Hymn 414 in the old school hymn-book:

“Go work in My vineyard, the Master saith, Go!”

At the December Quarter-Day of 1889 the choir gave a service of song, “The Desire of All Nations,” when there was a splendid attendance of friends, in addition to the scholars. At this service a memoir of Mr. James Davenport, who had died a little while previously, was read.

Thus on the same afternoon one chapter in the musical history of the school was closed and another opened. Subsequently several services of song and cantatas were rendered, all of which proved attractive, and were the means of stimulating interest in the school generally. An early effort of the choir was the rendering of a cantata "The Choicest Gift." This took place on Sunday afternoon, October 11, 1891. The large room was filled with scholars and friends. The principal parts of the cantata were taken by Mrs. Unwin, soprano; Miss Alice Dudson, contralto; Mr. John Mather, tenor; and Mr. James Thorley, bass. After the formation of the choir Messrs. M. Swindells and John Lingard were annually appointed for several years to take charge of the musical arrangements for the afternoon of the annual sermon Sunday. At first only a few hymns were taken. Then, when mutual confidence between conductor and scholars was established, more ambitious pieces were attempted, instrumentalists were introduced, and the choir considerably enlarged by those who were willing to help on the special occasion. Visitors, hearing the scholars sing for the first time, have generally been surprised that five hundred young people could be trained with such precision to render anthems and other pieces generally undertaken only by trained choirs. The probable explanation is that the work has grown from very small beginnings, and also to the great patience exhibited by Mr. Swindells while training young people. The children's services in connection with the Anniversary have been a splendid success since their inauguration in 1888, and that success is maintained.

At the annual meeting in March, 1890, Mr. John Lingard was appointed co-secretary with Mr. Joseph Mellor. At the time Mr. Lingard was a teacher in the fourth class of boys, with Mr. Samuel Jackson and Mr. Thomas Hill as his colleagues. Mr. John Lingard is the eldest son of Mr. William Lingard, whose devoted labours in the school have already been referred to in this work; and in accepting the onerous duties of secretary the son

was emulating the example of his departed father, who was always ready to work to the utmost of his powers for the benefit of the school. On looking over the minute books while they were under the care of Mr. John Lingard, one is struck by their fulness of detail and the carefulness of the handwriting—two features especially valuable to the investigator, striving to build up out of resolutions and amendments a history which may possess interest long after the participants in the discussions had either passed away or transferred themselves to other spheres of labour. Mr. Lingard combined the duties of secretary with that of organist, and in both capacities served the school well. His introduction to the secretary's work was during a very serious illness of Mr. Joseph Mellor; and during Mr. Lingard's tenure of office he himself was incapacitated for many weeks by illness. To the great regret of all, Mr. John Lingard felt compelled to retire from Sunday school work in 1898, and consequently ceased to act as organist. His interest in the school is still maintained, however, for when the Sunday School Council was formed Mr. Lingard was one of the first members appointed in a representative capacity.

Following Mr. Lingard's retirement, Mr. James H. Hallworth was appointed in his stead, and has been faithful in his devotion to duty. The writer has never known Mr. Hallworth to be late at school, and only on rare occasions is he absent; and then duty elsewhere generally accounts for his not being in his accustomed place. In this particular he has followed in the footsteps of his father, Mr. Joseph Hallworth, who, when he was a teacher and officer, would much rather have come without breakfast than come late.

The following incident is a true story, told to illustrate the influence of music. During the Kaffir rising of 1906 a young man, who was formerly a scholar in Brentnall Street School, but who was then in the band of the Natal Mounted Rifles, was ordered into Zululand with his regiment. While there, his father sent him the music of the School Sermons. One evening he took out his instru-

ment and began to play some of the pieces. By-and-bye his comrades gathered round, and some sang while he played. The effect of the music in such a place, thousands of miles from the school, was deep, and we may cherish the hope that permanent good may be the result of the impromptu musical service almost within sight of Dinizulu's followers.

Mr. Henry Mellor, the senior visitor, passed away in November, 1885. He was brought to the school as a child by his father, as were his brothers and sisters. Appointed as a teacher when a very young man, he held office as teacher and visitor for more than fifty years, and always treated his position with the utmost respect. Tall, dignified, and possessing the characteristic of his father and brothers as a firm upholder of discipline, he permitted no slackness from those over whom he had been elected to rule. He was always serious when addressing the school from the desk. When announcing the hymn for dismissal he often used the phrase, "Once more, at the close of another Christian Sabbath within these walls——." It was a very serious matter for Mr. Mellor to occupy the position of being leader of the devotions of the young people; and he never abused the privilege or treated the subject as though it was of little moment. The vacancy in the visitorship created by the death of Mr. Mellor was filled by the election of Mr. Thomas Welch. As mentioned previously, Mr. Welch had been elected a visitor along with Mr. Horsfall in 1880, but subsequently he had declined re-nomination. He now took up the work afresh, and rendered further service in this direction for a term of years.

The death of Mr. Mellor was not the only one which the school was called upon to suffer about that time. In December, 1886, Mr. Charles Pickford, a young teacher of great promise, was called away. The death of this young man evoked a remarkable demonstration of affection, and a special resolution was entered upon the minutes recording the sense of loss felt by the teachers in what appeared to be the untimely death of their colleague.

In March, 1886, the time for opening afternoon school was altered to two o'clock. This change was probably due to a desire to meet the convenience of those scholars who, unfortunately, had developed the habit of coming late. One remedy (which may or may not have been successful) would have been to exclude those who were not prepared to make an effort to be present when the opening hymn was announced. But other counsels prevailed; and if the scholars could not meet the time of the school, then the school would meet the convenience of the scholars. There were some who saw in this step a giving way to the "softness" of the age, and advocated an adherence to the Spartan discipline which (they said) had stood the school in good stead for so many years. There has been a further change since the days referred to, and the school now begins at a quarter *past* two—and still there are late-comers!

The Sunday Evening Service for children, which has been held in the Infant Room for a number of years, had its origin in a suggestion laid before the Sunday School Committee by the late Rev. William Hunt. Mr. Hunt was the first superintendent minister appointed to Trinity, and at a meeting of the committee he attended in January, 1887, he suggested that it would be a good thing to hold a young people's service in the school on Sunday evening from six to seven o'clock. This would relieve the chapel, and at the same time the children would have a service more suitable to their young minds. The idea was not acted upon immediately, but later, as mentioned on a succeeding page, the idea was put into practice. The services are still held, and well attended.

The outstanding feature of the year 1887 is, of course, the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The unique character of the celebrations are still remembered by those who were fortunate enough to participate in them. Many who are now approaching middle-age will recall the pleasurable anticipation with which that event was contemplated all over the country. Almost every school, day and Sunday, sought to make the occasion memorable in the

lives of the scholars. The committee appointed to consider the celebration by Brentnall Street consisted of Messrs. S. Rigby, Thomas Brandreth, J. J. Fairbourn, A. Horsfall, Thomas Welch, Joseph Mellor, and Robert Mellor, the last-named gentleman acting as secretary. On Monday, June 20, the scholars assembled at the school, and then marched in procession to Mr. Horsfall's field at Castle Farm, Mile End Lane, halting on the way to sing two hymns at the house of Mr. Thomas Bayley on Buxton Road. All the teachers and scholars were wearing Jubilee medals. At the field large marquees had been erected, and in these a substantial tea was laid, the young people greatly appreciating the good things provided under such novel circumstances. The committee also distributed over six hundred oranges. The proceedings passed off with much enthusiasm, and the only untoward incident is betrayed by an entry in the minutes when the thanks of the Committee were ordered to be sent to a lady "for washing a little girl who had been testing the quality of the mud in Mr. Horsfall's pit." There is no indication as to the identity of the child, but if she is alive to read this account of her escapade, and if the passing years have not effaced the circumstance from her memory, let her extract what satisfaction she can from the fact that she is the only *scholar* who is mentioned in the whole proceedings of the Jubilee committee. The committee met a week after the celebration, and among the resolutions passed was the following: "That the final meeting be held as soon as possible after all the bills had been paid, and that the meeting be held at Mr. Rigby's house, Bramhall Mount, if the strawberries at that time are in a nice condition for eating!" It should be stated that Mr. Rigby himself presided at this meeting, and may possibly have had something to do with the drafting of the resolution.

It has previously been noticed that during the 'eighties the school attained a wonderful degree of prosperity. It has needed all the resources of the workers to maintain the standard then set up, and sometimes, in spite of all

the efforts put forth, confession has reluctantly to be made that there was a greater return for the energy expended on Sunday school work in those days than is obtainable now. Many reasons may be adduced for this change, especially when all denominations have to complain of decline in the interest of both scholars and teachers. The writer is convinced that the main cause of the great success of the school at the time under consideration was the strong determination of all engaged in the work to make the institution prosperous—and prosperous in the highest sense, for at that time there was a willingness even among the scholars to help in the work. Soon after Trinity Chapel was opened special mission services were held there, and the Rev. William Hunt, the superintendent minister, was most indefatigable in his efforts to secure the young people of the school as members of the Church. The mission was a pronounced success, and this probably was one of the reasons of the fine condition of the school. It would doubtless be equally true to say that the way was paved for the mission by the preparatory work of the school. One of the results of the spiritual activity then displayed was the formation of a large Girls' Society Class by Miss Sarah Wilson. This class is still in existence, and some of the earliest members who joined the class on its formation are among the most regular attenders. Miss Wilson was appointed a teacher in the school in July, 1886, and for many years rendered splendid service, until the care of her aged parents rendered her retirement advisable. A notable feature of her work has been the number of girls she has been able to gather into the Church, and that very largely through her Sunday School teaching. On the establishment of the Sunday School Council Miss Wilson was one of the first elected representatives. In 1913 she and her sister removed to Northallerton, and thus brought to an end a connection with Brentnall Street which was lifelong, and one which had been instrumental in building up the spiritual life of teacher and scholar.

A teacher who entered the school about this time,

who left an indelible impression upon the life of the scholars, was Mr. George Heald, a name remembered with great affection by many young men, some of them now in distant parts of the world, and others occupying important positions in Church and Sunday school at home. The writer was one of his scholars, and takes this opportunity of bearing testimony to the great influence which Mr. Heald exerted on his own life. Mr. Heald came of distinguished Methodist ancestry, and in coming to labour among the Wesleyans of Stockport associated with Sunday school work a name which had been famous in the same connection for a hundred years previously. Mr. George Heald's great-uncle was Mr. James Heald, of Parr's Wood, Didsbury, a former Member of Parliament for Stockport, the Treasurer of the Wesleyan Connexional Missionary Society, a promoter of the building of Tiviot Dale Chapel, and one of the most generous Methodists of his day. Mr. G. Heald's great-grandfather was the Mr. James Heald who was associated as an officer with the "Methodist Sunday School" in Wesley Street, and was one of the original subscribers towards the cost of building the present Stockport Sunday School. If heredity counts for anything, much might be expected from such antecedents. Mr. George Heald's introduction to the school was as chairman of a Juvenile Foreign Missionary meeting, held in December, 1888. In January, 1889, he was accepted as a teacher, and placed in the class next below the senior, then called the seventh-first, with Mr. Joseph Hallworth as a colleague. The effect of his teaching was immediately felt. His lessons were wonderfully fresh, delivered with dramatic force, and with illustrations which exactly suited young fellows of the age of that particular class. Soon after his coming a large Society Class was formed, with Mr. Rigby and Mr. Heald as leaders. This class has been the training-ground for many who are now active workers in the Church. Memory goes back with delight to the Wednesday evenings of the Class-meetings. It was a point of honour with the leaders to be in attendance week by week; both of them usually spoke words of counsel

and admonition; and, strange to say, the youths and young men were not backward in speaking publicly. There was not much in the way of "experience" which they could speak of, for they had only just begun to tread the road of a Christian life. But they got accustomed to the sound of their own voices, and that was an achievement on the part of the leaders. There was a keen rivalry between the boys' and girls' classes as to who should have the best attendance on Sunday morning, and the standard held up for emulation was Mr. Heald's class.

An important service which Mr. Heald rendered was the introduction to the school of Mr. Thomas Johnson, superintendent of the Charter Street Ragged School, Manchester. This school had been established in a district where the poverty of the people was deplorable, and the morals of the neighbourhood were not of the best. It was considered dangerous at one time for a stranger to walk unattended in the vicinity of Angel Meadow and Charter Street, but during recent years, probably owing to the activity of the Corporation in clearing away objectionable property, and certainly owing to the labours of Mr. Johnson and his co-workers, a great improvement has been made, and large business establishments are being erected on sites formerly occupied by slum property. Mr. Thomas Johnson had been a poor boy in the Manchester streets, often with no better shelter than an orange box for a bed, but having been brought under the influence of Charter Street Mission, eventually became its superintendent. Mr. Heald was also interested in the school, and frequently went to speak to the young scholars and old folks who assembled there. Mr. Heald was deputed by the teachers' meeting to induce Mr. Johnson to visit Brentnall Street. This invitation was accepted, and the effect of the vivid stories which Mr. Johnson told relating to the work of the Mission among the most abandoned men and women was profound. The first visit was paid in 1891, and a collection was taken in the school for the work at Charter Street. Mr. Johnson visited Brentnall Street annually for several years, until a serious breakdown in



Mr. Joseph Stretch



Mr. Matthew Swindells



Mr. James Howard



Mr. Abraham Horsfall



Mr. Samuel Rhodes



Mr. Samuel Hill



Mr. Joseph Hallworth

health compelled him to send a deputy, and since then he only occasionally visited the town.

Mr. Heald induced several young people of Brentnall Street to form a concert party to entertain the children of Charter Street, and one or two visits were paid, when Mr. Heald acted as chairman. One of the earliest efforts in open-air speaking which the present writer made was from a lurry in a court near Angel Meadow, Manchester. On the improvised platform were also Mr. Johnson, Mr. Heald, and Mr. J. A. Wilson, who was then in the Senior Class at Brentnall Street. It was a painful experience—painful, that is, when contemplating the squalor and degradation of the audience—but one which was productive of good, for among the hearers was an old woman who, with tears rolling down her cheeks, confessed that a remark from one of the speakers had brought memories of her childhood back again, and made her think of the tragic misuse she had made of her life. The incident certainly had its effect upon one who witnessed it. Mr. Heald was also instrumental in getting the Band of Hope choir to give a service of song at a mission hall at Walkden. Mr. George Dudson was the conductor of the choir, Mr. Thomas Rothwell read the connective readings, and Mr. Heald presided over the meeting. The efforts of the young people from Brentnall Street were much appreciated. There was an intense feeling of regret when Mr. Heald removed to Wilmslow, but the effect of his work of two and a half years will undoubtedly continue to be exerted in the lives of those whom he was able to influence.

Another teacher appointed at the same meeting as Mr. Heald was Miss Emily Smith, daughter of the late Rev. Benjamin Smith, who had come to reside in Trinity Circuit as a supernumerary minister. Miss Smith was appointed to the sixth class of girls, and two years later took charge of the senior class, when Mr. James Howard, who up to then had been the teacher, became absentee visitor. Miss Smith continued to work in the school for seven years with very great acceptance, when she retired on her marriage to Mr. Robert Mellor.

CHAPTER VII.

SHORTLY before Hillgate Chapel was closed as a Methodist place of worship, Mr. J. W. Yearsley was appointed as a missionary, and it was owing largely to his indefatigable labours that a mission room was erected in Johnson Street, Higher Hillgate. This homely little structure of wood and iron rapidly became a place of much religious activity. Mission bands were formed for open-air work, and the streets were visited Sunday by Sunday by these workers. The procession generally finished at the door of the mission room a few minutes before the appointed time for service, and the people were given an invitation to enter the little house of prayer. The result of this labour was that the place was soon filled to overflowing, and a very successful work was begun and carried on—a success which has been maintained until the present day, although the congregation now meets in a far more commodious place of worship in Hempshaw Lane. In the work of building up the cause at Johnson Street the scholars of Brentnall Street took a not inconsiderable share. Some of them were on each of the mission bands referred to, and learned to test their oratorical powers while engaged in this congenial occupation. More than one became local preachers through this introduction to Christian work.

Time went on, and it became apparent that to conserve the work at the mission room and to deal with the children of the people who had become regular worshippers, a Sunday school was necessary. As the mission itself was a branch of the Chapel, and as the Society was, and is still, part of the Society of Trinity and under the direction of one Leaders' Meeting, it seemed the proper thing to organise a school which would be under the direction of the Committee of Brentnall Street School, and would be considered as a branch. This was the idea at the begin-

ning, but it was found to be unworkable, and the scheme for a branch school was not proceeded with. In January, 1890, the teachers' meeting of Brentnall Street, on the recommendation of the officers of the school, nominated the following gentlemen as the first teachers of Johnson Street: Messrs. Charles Preston, Charles Bainbridge, Fred Fox, and John Harrison, and Mr. Thomas Rothwell as superintendent. The initial steps for founding the mission school had been taken by the first four gentlemen named, who at that time were members of the senior class.

The original idea of opening Johnson Street Sunday School was to gather the very poor children of the neighbourhood, and the duty was laid upon the founders of finding clothes to cover the ill-clad bodies of the first scholars. A regular canvass was undertaken, and many a heart-ache was caused by the sights witnessed in some of the wretched homes. Clogs and cast-off clothes were begged, and the children made presentable. By-and-bye the workers had the great joy of seeing the scholars taking a pride in their personal appearance, the seed of the Kingdom bore fruit, and many of the young people who at the first seemed the most unpromising became teachers, and rendered conspicuous service in the school.

In March, 1890, the Committee of Brentnall Street resolved "that the superintendent and one of the teachers of Johnson Street Branch School become members of this Committee"; but in April, 1891, the same Committee (the Rev. John Baker, M.A., being in the chair) passed the following resolution: "That Johnson Street Branch School, having been constituted an independent school, the representation to this Committee lapses, and the Committee hereby express their best wishes for the welfare of the said school." From that time Johnson Street has managed its own affairs, and managed them so well that the school is now both large and prosperous, and shows signs of abundant vitality. The good wishes extended from the Committee in the foregoing resolution are certainly endorsed by those who have succeeded to the responsibility of managing Brentnall Street.

Mr. Rothwell held the office of superintendent of Johnson Street for about eighteen months, when he returned to Brentnall Street. Afterwards the position was filled by Mr. J. A. Dearden and by Mr. G. Dudson. Following these gentlemen came Mr. Thomas Walker (himself a former scholar and teacher of Brentnall Street), who directed the affairs of the school for twenty-one years with much distinction, and who retired in 1913, to the great regret of the fellow-workers. His successor was Mr. John Watson, who had been acting as assistant superintendent for some time.

Mr. James Davenport passed away on November 17, 1889. His attendance up to the last was most exemplary. Always present when health permitted, always in time, always ready with a cheery smile for those who were associated with him in the work, his loss caused a gap which was at once realised by all in the school. The children loved him. He presided over the Infant Room more like a father than as a superintendent. For twenty years the younger children of the school had been his especial charge, and he retained his own youthful spirit to such a degree that he was able to enter fully into the life of the little folk. For a further twenty-one years, prior to the erection of the present building, he had been school secretary, and for a term a teacher before that, and it was difficult to realise, when the change did come, that his work was finished, and the school would know him no more. At a subsequent meeting of the Committee the following resolution was passed: "The Committee desire to place on record their deep sense of the loss they have sustained by the death of Mr. James Davenport, who for a period of over forty-five years faithfully served the offices of teacher, secretary, and Infant Room superintendent."

The vacancy created by the death of Mr. Davenport was filled by the appointment of Mr. Joseph Hallworth as visitor or superintendent of the Infant Room. Probably no man in the school at that time was better qualified than Mr. Hallworth to carry on the traditions left by his predecessor. He was not a stranger to the work of the

school or of the department over which he was called to preside. He had been brought to the school as a child, passed through the various classes as a scholar, followed by a similar succession as a teacher, beginning at the Infant Room, and the continued prosperity of the "nursery" of the school was proof that Mr. Hallworth was in a congenial sphere. The young children were not slow to show their appreciation. Mr. Hallworth had established a fine reputation whilst a teacher in the large room of being able to interest the whole of the scholars by his addresses from the desk. These addresses were delivered with much force, and the stories from life which he told have remained in the memories of those who were his auditors. When he addressed the children in the lower room he received the same attention—there was rarely any need for the teachers to exert themselves to obtain the interest of the scholars while Mr. Hallworth was speaking. Mr. Hallworth was able to secure the hearty co-operation of his fellow-teachers; and they, on their part, were loth to leave the Infant Room when promotion-time came. A noticeable feature of Mr. Hallworth's term of office was his punctuality. Mr. Hallworth retained his position until he had completed fifty years' attendance at the school, when he retired, to the regret of all his fellow-workers.

An incident occurred at the Parents' Party in December, 1890, which has fixed that particular party upon the memory of those who were there. A large company had assembled, as usual, to enjoy Mr. Rigby's hospitality. During the progress of the meeting word was conveyed that Mrs. Lees, mother of one of the young ladies of the choir and of the present school caretaker, had been taken seriously ill, and it was not until the proceedings were over that everyone was shocked to hear that the unfortunate lady had died in one of the classrooms downstairs.

At another party, near the date of the one just mentioned, an accident occurred which, but for Divine providence, might have resulted in awful tragedy. After

tea is over it is customary to take up a trap door in the floor of the large room, and through the aperture the tables are passed to a worker standing below. On this particular occasion the place was left for a moment unguarded, and a little child, wandering away from its mother, and all unconscious of danger, fell through the opening, and disappeared with a scream out of sight. There was great commotion among the guests, for many knew how great would be the fall. It could not have been a mere coincidence that, just at that moment, a teacher stood below with open arms, ready to receive a table as it was passed down to him. The child fell safely into the arms of the teacher, and suffered nothing worse than a fright. This was just one of those occasions which would have merited a paragraph in the old *Methodist Magazine*, under the heading of "The Providence of God Displayed."

The centenary of the death of John Wesley occurred in March, 1891. The Book Room published a book entitled *The Father of Methodism*, which dealt in a simple and popular form with the career of the great Apostle of the eighteenth century. Over three hundred of these books were sold among the teachers and scholars at half cost, Mr. Rigby generously defraying the other half.

Mr. James Bell entered the school in December, 1892. He had come to Stockport as assistant master in the Day school, and immediately offered himself for work in the Sunday school and was appointed to the seventh-first class, with Mr. Samuel Rhodes and Mr. Thomas Rothwell as his fellow-teachers. Four years later, on the removal of Mr. J. J. Fairbourne to Withington, Mr. Bell was promoted to the senior class, where Mr. Robert Mellor was already a teacher. Mr. Mellor retired in 1900, and Mr. Bell and Mr. Joseph Stretch had charge of the class for some years. Soon after his transfer to the senior class Mr. Bell felt the need of providing the young men with some form of recreation for the week-day. The attendance at school on the Sunday was held to be insufficient, and the dangers of town life being so numerous, steps were taken to provide a counter-attraction to the blandishments

of those places where the moral tone was not of the character desired by Sunday school workers. Accordingly, steps were taken for the formation of a Young Men's Institute, which should be limited to the use of the young men's class, or at least to those who professed to be attached Methodists. A large house next to the school, which happened to be vacant at that time, was rented, and through the generosity of Mr. Rigby, furnished with chairs, tables, and pictures, and the place was opened on Tuesday, October 21, 1899, as a reading and recreation room, and was largely patronised by the young men for whom the place was intended. From its opening the rent of the Institute was paid by Mr. Rigby, and his contributions towards the upkeep have not been limited to the provision of the rent, for his donations in addition have been both numerous and substantial. In all the arrangements Mr. Bell took a leading part. The scheme owed its inception to him. In addition to attending during the week and taking a share in the social amenities, Mr. Bell held a Society Class on the premises, and endeavoured by that method to induce the young fellows to become allied with the Church. After a career of twelve or thirteen years it became apparent that there was not the same interest manifested in the Institute as had been the case at the beginning, and the Sunday School Council, to whom Mr. Rigby had transferred his interests, closed the building at the beginning of 1914.

A change which Mr. Bell advocated, along the same lines previously put forward by Mr. J. J. Fairbourne, was that the teachers' meeting should have a greater share in the management of the school than then obtained. The method of governing was altered in consequence of these representations, and many of the duties which at one time were undertaken by the Sunday School Committee were transferred to the teachers' meeting. However, the Wesleyan Conference of 1911 formulated a scheme of management of Sunday schools by Councils, which went beyond all schemes advocated or introduced at Brentnall Street during the preceding twenty years. This legislation

placed all the ordinary working affairs of the school under one governing body. Mr. Bell continued as an active teacher in the school until July, 1902, when he retired. Retirement from the duty of teaching, however, did not mean a suspension of activity. Mr. Bell has rendered distinguished service to the Church. His most notable work has been in connection with the Foreign Missionary Society. He was appointed secretary to the Circuit Missionary Committee, and was not satisfied until the annual contribution from the circuit reached a thousand pounds. This handsome sum placed Stockport (Trinity) at the head of all the circuits in Methodism in regard to the amount subscribed for the work of God abroad.

One of the landmarks in the school's history was the retirement, in March, 1892, of Mr. Rigby from the superintendency, which he had held for twelve years. Appointed in 1880 as colleague to Mr. Hooley, and after Mr. Hooley's death holding the position of sole superintendent, Mr. Rigby had wielded a wonderful influence both among the teachers and scholars. The time had now arrived, however, when, in Mr. Rigby's opinion, a change would be good for all concerned, and he definitely refused to accept nomination for a further term. A year or two before he had expressed a similar determination, but the importunity of the teachers' meeting had been strong enough to shake his own resolution, and he had allowed himself to continue in the honourable position. It was now decided to have two superintendents, thus reverting to a custom which had obtained in the school years before. In days gone by Messrs. Hough and Bradley had been co-superintendents; Messrs. Bradley and Heginbotham; and Messrs. Hooley and Rigby, had each held the office conjointly. The two superintendents chosen on Mr. Rigby's retirement were Councillor John Turner and Mr. Thomas Brandreth. The latter gentleman was the senior visitor, and was no stranger to the work of superintending the school.

Like many others who have held office at Brentnall Street, regularity and punctuality were among the virtues exhibited by Mr. Brandreth. He was very quiet in his

demeanour, plodding and persevering, and generally knew his own mind. His addresses from the desk were delivered with deliberation, rather quietly, with little gesture, but frequently had some point which fastened itself in the memory of his hearers. Just before his election to the superintendency he had an illness which made serious inroads upon his nervous energy. This seemed to make him exceedingly sensitive to any touching incident, even in his own addresses, and he frequently "broke down" while in the desk, and tears trickled down his cheeks. On Quarter-Days Mr. Brandreth paid particular attention to the correct repetition of the catechism, and was always anxious that it should be taught carefully.

Mr. John Turner, who entered the school as co-superintendent, was, like his colleague, thoroughly accustomed to Sunday school work, although his experience had not been gained at Brentnall Street. As a youth he came from Bollington to Stockport, and shortly afterwards joined Stockport Sunday School as a scholar. Passing through all the classes, he eventually became a teacher in that institution, and, at the time he entered upon office at the school, occupied a distinguished public position. For several years he had been a member of the Town Council, and undertook a full share of the municipal work incident upon his position as a councillor. From his early manhood he had been a local preacher, and was frequently called upon in that capacity, his ministrations in the pulpit being most acceptable. To all his other duties Mr. Turner now added those arising out of the superintendency of Brentnall Street. It will readily be allowed that his life was a busy one, and that leisure and he were not very close friends.

There is one particular feature which made Mr. Turner's term of office notable. Not that there is only one thing to be noted—the school was alive in many respects at that time. The special feature referred to was the election, in November, 1892, of Mr. Turner to the Mayoralty of the Borough of Stockport. This was the first occasion when the school had a Mayor for superintendent. At the teachers' meeting Mr. Turner was heartily congratulated

upon his distinguished honour, and the best wishes of all his colleagues for health and success in his high office were extended to the superintendent. On the Sunday the Mayor attended Trinity Chapel in state, the school was opened at nine o'clock, and dismissed at a quarter to ten to enable the male teachers to join the Mayoral procession. The Rev. T. W. Johnstone, the superintendent minister, was the preacher, and delivered a very appropriate sermon. Mr. Turner was elected Mayor for a second year, a further cause of gratification to the teachers.

On retiring from the superintendency, Mr. Rigby was presented by the officers and teachers with a beautifully-illuminated address, recording their appreciation of the work he had been able to accomplish during the twelve years he had held office, and of kindly hope for his future welfare. While Mr. Rigby had given up the chief position in the school, he was not allowed to retire from the work altogether—indeed, he had frequently expressed his desire to remain associated with all the activities of the school, even though he should cease to be responsible for the management. He was therefore made a visitor, thirty-one years after he first entered the school. A few weeks after his election he took an extended trip on the Continent, and on his return he addressed the scholars from the desk in the large room, giving them a description of some of the places he had visited. At the same meeting which appointed Mr. Rigby a visitor, Mr. James Howard was also promoted from the position of teacher of the Senior Class of Girls and made absentee visitor—a post which he continued to hold for several years. The list of officers and teachers after the new appointments had taken place was as follows:—

Superintendents:

Mr. THOS. BRANDRETH, Mr. JOHN TURNER.

Visitors:

Mr. ABRAHAM HORSFALL	Mr. THOMAS WELCH
„ SAMUEL RIGBY	„ JAMES HOWARD
Mr. JOSEPH HALLWORTH (Infant Room).	

Secretaries :

Mr. JOHN LINGARD, Mr. JOSEPH MELLOR.

Teachers :

Mr. J. J. Fairbourne	Miss Emily Smith
„ Robert Mellor	„ Eliza P. Taylor
„ Samuel Rhodes	„ Jane M. Taylor
„ James Bell	„ Sarah Wilson
„ Thomas Rothwell	„ Sarah A. Pickup
„ Samuel Hill	„ Sarah A. Axon
„ Matthew Swindells	„ Margaret Leah
„ Frank Davenport	„ Margaret Ratcliffe
„ George Dudson	„ Mary E. Lomas
„ J. H. Booth	„ Mary Fairbourne
„ Herbert Johnson	„ Ellen Woods
„ Thomas Hill	„ Annie Burgess
„ James Harrop	„ Mary Cooper
„ James Walker	„ Maria Dale
„ John Bennett	„ Mary Green
„ John Holland	„ Elizabeth Wilson
„ George Bouskill	„ Elizabeth Spencer
„ William Hague	„ Annie Howard
„ H. B. Leah	„ Laura Leah
„ Robert Rothwell	„ Emma Dudson
„ John W. Chappell	„ Mary A. Williamson
„ Arthur Wilson	„ Elizabeth Walker

Brentnall Street scholars celebrated the wedding of their present Majesties King George and Queen Mary by holding a special field day at Mr. Fallows's farm in Bramhall Lane. This took place on Thursday, July 6, 1893, and proved a huge success. The committee appointed to manage the business of this unique occasion was composed of Messrs. W. Hague, H. B. Leah, G. Bouskill, F. Davenport, S. Rhodes, and R. Mellor; Misses Fairbourne, E. Smith, and S. Wilson.

Twenty years ago the preachers at Trinity were sometimes embarrassed by the large number of very young children who assembled on Sunday evening. The presence

of this large concourse of young folk sometimes proved rather a disturbing factor, instead of being an inspiration to the preacher. The officers of the school were asked to make suggestions, and their recommendation was that advocated by the Rev. William Hunt in 1887, namely, the establishment of Sunday evening services for children under fourteen years of age, these services to be held from six o'clock to seven in the Infant Room. The opening meeting was held on Sunday, December 16, 1894, and the first committee was comprised of the following teachers:—Messrs. Thomas Rothwell, J. W. Chappell, Robert Rothwell, and Arthur Wilson; and Misses Howard, Spencer, and E. Wilson. These meetings were a great success, and have been the means of gathering together children who may have roamed the streets on Sunday evening. Mr. Thomas Rothwell and Mr. Joseph Stretch are the present joint-conductors; Mr. William Hague acts as secretary; and Mr. Joseph Hallworth, jun., has discharged the duties of accompanist with commendable regularity.

The Wesley Guild was organised at the chapel in 1895. This is a movement, as most Methodists are aware, which aims at binding young people to School and Church by means of regular literary, social, and devotional meetings. In many places the movement has been attended with signal success. The Rev. J. Bourne Jones, the superintendent minister, paid particular attention to the young folk of the school and congregation, and he was mainly responsible for launching the Guild. The meetings were successful, and the Band Room at the chapel was regularly filled by the members. Unfortunately the movement did not appeal to the young men of the school, and, while the Guild was always well supported by the ladies, both of the school and congregation, a very serious defect was the absence of the other sex. The first representatives to the Wesley Guild Committee from the Sunday school were Miss Emily Smith and Mr. Joseph Stretch, who were appointed to this position in December, 1895.

After having held office of superintendent for just three

years, Mr. Thomas Brandreth passed away on March 21, 1895, at the age of sixty-eight. His death was almost like the closing of another chapter in the school life, for he was one of those who were in office in the old school, and the number of these old workers was rapidly dwindling.

The funeral of Mr. Brandreth was made the occasion of a remarkable demonstration of the affection in which he was held by the teachers and scholars of the school. Mr. Turner, Mr. Rigby, Mr. Horsfall, Mr. Joseph Hallworth, Mr. S. Rhodes, the Rev. T. W. Johnstone, and Mr. H. A. Johnstone rode in coaches with the relatives, several of the teachers acted as bearers, and more than a hundred teachers and elder scholars walked in the funeral procession. At Trinity Chapel, on the following Sunday morning, the Rev. John Nayler spoke of the loss the Church, and especially the Sunday School had sustained by the death of Mr. Brandreth, and said that, from what he had heard, Mr. Brandreth's character stood well, not only with his fellow-members of the Church, but with the outside world as a man of integrity. On the next Quarter Day Mr. Turner read a memoir of Mr. Brandreth, in which the leading characteristics of the departed superintendent's life were placed before the scholars.

At the time of his death Mr. Brandreth was president of the Band of Hope, and the Committee were of the opinion that a memorial of the fact was desirable. They accordingly took steps to secure a portrait for presentation to the school; but on making inquiries it was found that there was not a really good photograph of Mr. Brandreth in existence. The only help in this direction was the photograph of a group of teachers, taken at Gawsorth on a Saturday afternoon's outing. In this group Mr. Brandreth is seen wearing a hat. However, when this likeness was shown to the artist (Mr. F. D. Bates, himself an old scholar of the school), he said that his own recollection of the features of Mr. Brandreth would enable him to overcome the defect of the hat, and by-and-bye a beautiful portrait was completed, and given to the school by the Band of Hope Committee. In this matter Mr.

Rigby displayed his characteristic generosity, and made possible by his help what would have been a big undertaking without such assistance.

Following Mr. Brandreth's death, Mr. Turner was elected sole superintendent, but only held the office for twelve months. At the end of that time he declined to allow himself to be re-nominated. In March, 1896, Mr. Rigby was again elected superintendent, and Mr. Turner became a visitor. Mr. Thomas Welch retired from his visitorship at this meeting. His work had been very valuable to the school, and his class lessons and addresses from the desk had been greatly appreciated. Although he vacated his position as visitor, Mr. Welch continued to serve the school as a member of the Committee of Management. His life seemed to be wrapped up in Trinity Chapel. He occupied a foremost place in the arrangements for the building of that place of worship, watching it rise slowly day by day. Great was his joy when, one day, he stopped the writer with the exclamation, "Have you noticed that we have got to the roof of the chapel? We shall soon have the opening service now!" When the chapel was opened for worship, Mr. Welch became chapel steward, and most zealously did he discharge the trust reposed in him. Every brick and stone might have been his personal property, so great was his care in the management of the trust estate. He continued to manifest the same kindly interest in school and chapel until his removal to Lytham; and from his retirement at that delightful watering-place he frequently inquires how things are progressing at "dear old Brentnall Street," and not seldom sends tokens of his regard in a very practical fashion.

The vacancy in the list of visitors created by Mr. Welch's retirement was filled by the election of Mr. Samuel Rhodes. Appointed to teaching in 1875, Mr. Rhodes had applied himself steadily to the work of his office, and had gradually been promoted until, at the time of his choice as a visitor, he was in charge of the class next below the senior. Among his characteristics were

patience, steadiness of purpose, and a strict regard for doing what he considered to be the correct thing. If there was a rule to be observed, or a certain prescribed way of doing a thing, Mr. Rhodes's mind inclined towards observing the letter of the law. He did not often address the school, choosing rather to take the opening of the sessions. In this exercise he was always most reverent, both in the reading of the hymns and the Word of God. For a time he was treasurer of the Sunday school, and his punctilious regard for doing things in order was probably shown in this department of his work more than in any other duty he undertook. Mr. Rhodes did much committee work, for the visitors were *ex-officio* members of all committees, and only those who have experienced the so-called joys of office know the amount of work which is literally heaped upon those whom the school delights to honour.

The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria was celebrated in 1897 by the scholars in a way which has left pleasant memories to those who participated in the festivities. The Teachers' Meeting appointed the following committee to make arrangements for the proper observance of such an occasion, namely, Messrs. Joseph Stretch, J. A. Wilson, H. B. Leah, James Bell, S. Rhodes, Misses Wilson, Green, and Ratcliffe, with Mr. Samuel Hill acting as secretary. On Tuesday, June 22, 1897, the commemoration day of the Queen's long reign, the scholars met in the school at half-past three, where they found an excellent sandwich tea upon the tables. The infants were in their own classroom, the lecture room was filled with a happy company of the younger portion of the senior department, and the elder scholars had tea in the large room. The number entertained was over six hundred. After tea a procession was formed, and, headed by St. Ann's Band, the scholars proceeded to Mr. Fallows's farm in Bramhall Lane, halting on the way to sing at the house of the Rev. Benjamin Smith, a custom which was observed on the occasion of the field treat every year until Mr. Smith's death. At the field sports and games were indulged in until dusk, and

before the company dispersed each of the junior scholars received a toy. On the following Sunday a Jubilee Commemoration Service was held in the school, when Mr. John Turner gave the address, and the choir sang the Jubilee hymn, "God save the King and nation." There was a further reminder of the special occasion on Sunday, July 7th, when the whole of the teachers and scholars received a Jubilee New Testament, which had been specially prepared. The expenses of the celebration were met by a grant of £10 by the Committee of the school, £5 from the Band of Hope, £5 from Mr. Rigby, and Mr. James Bell and Mr. Arthur Wilson collected the balance of £9 2s. 6d. from friends of the school.

The Diamond Jubilee year also witnessed the first flower service held in the school. This service was so successful that it has become an annual event. The conservatory at Mr. Rigby's house was laid under contribution, and the tall palms and beautiful flowering plants sent by the superintendent made the interior of the school a place of beauty. In addition, the scholars were invited to bring flowers and plants, and they responded loyally to the appeal. After the service the cut flowers were distributed to sick scholars and friends. When, in after years, Mr. Rigby disposed of Bramhall Mount, considerable fear was felt by the teachers that the flower service would be shorn of much of its attraction, for great reliance had been placed upon the help which had been afforded in this particular manner. But the scholars endeavoured to remedy what was undoubtedly a serious loss, and their own contributions during recent years have been quite as large as formerly. There is always interest in beginnings, and the programme of the first flower service is appended :

Opening Hymn.

Prayer.

CHOIR "Here, Lord, we offer Thee"
 RECITATION Master FRANK HILL
 CHOIR "Lord Jesus, we adore Thee"

Address - MR. RIGBY.

Hymn.

Address - MR. JAMES BELL, B.A.

SOLO—"Come, children, bring your offerings"

ALICE SWINDELLS

RECITATION Mr. WILLIAM JONES

CHOIR "I'll hie me down to yonder bank"

Closing Hymn.



CHAPTER VIII.

MENTION has already been made of the remarkable spell of prosperity which visited the school in the 'eighties. This continued for several years. During that period the officers were not under the necessity of devising plans for improving attendance of scholars, for, morning and afternoon, the school was well filled—in the latter part of the day especially, and frequently the large room was so crowded that the accommodation was taxed to find places for all who came. The superintendent and visitors were most diligent in their attendance, setting an example to all. The teachers vied with each other as to who should have the class with the best percentage of attendance; and the scholars were not slow to respond to the appeal of the officers and teachers. The Infant Room, then under the superintendency of Mr. Joseph Hallworth, was also in a prosperous condition. There came a time, however, when symptoms of decline began to manifest themselves. The morning attendance was the first to suffer. Brentnall Street was not alone in this respect, for it is now common knowledge that almost every school in the land had to complain of the same falling-off in attendance. About twenty years ago the matter demanded urgent attention, for it was then seen that the apparent indifference was not a temporary whim on the part of the scholars, but was an indication of a decline of interest, not pleasant to contemplate. Reference is made in the minutes of the Teachers' Meeting to the concern which the officers and teachers felt at this state of affairs. Mr. Thomas Rothwell was among the first to urge the fact of the diminished attendance upon the consideration of the officers, and frequent reference to the matter was made at the Parents' Party, the parents themselves being affectionately solicited not to place any obstacle in the way of the regular and punctual attendance of the scholars. One suggestion to

meet the difficulty was to open morning school at quarter-past nine instead of nine o'clock. This proposal was defeated. However, the defeat only meant its postponement, and the morning school now begins at half-past nine.

As an incentive to the scholars to attend regularly, the "Star System" of marking attendance was adopted in January, 1898. This method, which was introduced to the notice of the Teachers' Meeting by Mr. James Bell, is one which is generally understood by Sunday school workers nowadays, but at the time of its introduction was looked upon with scant sympathy by those who had been accustomed all their lives to a voluntary and an eager attendance at Sunday school—both morning and afternoon—without hope of any reward beyond the help which was afforded by the lessons and the joining together in divine worship. Briefly explained, the "Star System" obtains its name from the fact that each scholar is provided with a card, upon which squares are printed corresponding with each Sunday of the year. When the child attends early a star is stamped in the space for that particular Sunday; when late, a circle is used; when sick, a letter "s" is needed. Those who make a certain percentage of attendances receive a reward: it was this latter consideration which did not specially appeal to some of the older workers at Brentnall Street. It has been urged by some Christian workers that the helpful lessons of officers and teachers should be sufficient inducement for young people to attend on the Lord's Day. On the institution of the "Star System" at Brentnall Street, Mr. Horace B. Leah was appointed to superintend its working, and his assistants were Messrs. Joseph Hallworth, junr., Thomas Brown, junr., Thomas H. Swindells, and James Jackson. The reward for attendance during the first year was a trip to Disley, which certainly proved a very enjoyable outing. The pleasure was heightened by Mr. Rigby's generosity in paying for the trip. The system worked well for a few years; then interest seemed to flag, and for a short time the method was discontinued.

It was afterwards re-commenced, and is still in operation.

Very happy memories are associated with a function which took place this year, and the regret is general that the affair could not be made an annual one. At a Teachers' Meeting in May, 1898, Mr. Rigby extended an invitation to the officers and teachers to hold the next quarterly meeting at his house. It is scarcely necessary to add that the invitation was accepted with much cordiality. The meeting was held in the evening of June 30. When the teachers arrived at Bramhall Mount they found few signs of a business meeting, but, instead, abundant evidence of a garden party. A large marquee had been erected at the rear of the house, and within tables were prepared for a sumptuous repast. Nothing seemed to be lacking. An ideal evening, well-spread tables, congenial company, and a host who seemed to derive infinite pleasure from ministering to the pleasures of others—what could the teachers wish for more! A distinguishing feature of Mr. Rigby's arrangements for parties during the summer time was his provision of strawberries, and they were not lacking on this festive occasion. Speaking of strawberries brings to my mind another incident. On one occasion Mr. Rigby invited the boys of his Society Class to his house. After games in the field, and bowls on the then newly-laid bowling green behind Bramhall Mount, strawberries and cream were served, and the supply was so abundant that each boy received his portion upon a dinner plate! None of the guests complained that the plates were too large! The Rev. William Hunt was then superintendent minister, and he happened to put in an appearance just as the boys were in the midst of their repast. The sight afforded Mr. Hunt intense amusement.

The great Twentieth Century Fund was launched in 1898. This fund, inaugurated by Conference, was intended to be a thankoffering by Methodists for the divine blessings received during the nineteenth century, and to provide means for the developing of Methodism during the opening years of the new century. A committee was formed at Trinity, to which representatives from the Sunday school

were appointed. The teachers deputed were Mr. James Bell and Mr. Joseph Stretch; from the Young Men's Class, Mr. J. W. Hopkins; and from the Young Women's Class, Miss Alice Dudson. The secretary appointed to supervise the collection of subscriptions in the school was Mr. J. W. Walgate, who had then recently been appointed assistant master in the Day School, and who entered the Sunday School as a teacher in March, 1898.

During the year 1898 Mr. John Lingard retired from the positions of secretary and school organist. The new secretary was Mr. Horace B. Leah, who, from his profession as an accountant, was well qualified for the position. As was the case with his predecessor, Mr. Leah also followed in his father's footsteps when he became a teacher at Brentnall Street. He is the second son of the late Mr. George Leah, who was appointed a teacher in 1855, and he himself began to teach in 1892, along with Mr. George Bouskill and Mr. William Hague. Mr. Leah proved himself to be a conscientious worker, devoting himself assiduously to the work of the office; his minutes are a pleasure to read, and the detailed record of the various functions held during his secretaryship provide almost a complete history of the school during that period.

Shortly after the time under consideration the school suffered a series of losses by the retirement or death of several teachers. Mr. Robert Mellor, who retired in March, 1900, had been a teacher for twenty-six years, having been appointed to the lowest class in the school in 1874. He was a teacher of the sixth class of boys at the height of its singing fame. At the time of his retirement he was a colleague of Mr. James Bell in the Young Men's Class. Mr. Bell himself retired from the office of teacher in June, 1902, and his name was transferred to the reserve list of speakers. In this capacity he has retained his working connection with the school. Mr. Arthur Wilson, who resigned in 1900, on his removal from Stockport, had rendered distinguished service as the secretary to the Juvenile Foreign Missionary Committee. He was a very attractive teacher, the younger children taking great

delight in his lessons. His transfer to a north of England circuit simply meant that a new field of Sunday school activity was opened out for him.

Another teacher who retired in 1900 was Mr. J. H. Booth, who transferred his services to Great Moor Wesleyan Chapel, then recently opened. This wood and iron structure was formerly the Johnson Street Mission Room, and after its supersession by the large brick building, now the Hemphshaw Lane Mission Hall, was removed to Norwood Road, and became a centre of activity until the opening in 1913 of the present beautiful chapel in Woods Moor. Then, for the second time, the little "tin tabernacle" became deserted. Mr. Booth became instrumental, along with others, in founding a Sunday school at Great Moor, and for some years acted as superintendent. As a teacher he was specially beloved by the young boys. Prior to his removal he had a Society Class of boys, with Mr. J. W. Chappell as co-leader. This class had a very successful career, before business dispersed many of its members. Probably half the boys—now, of course, grown to men—are abroad, handing on, it is hoped, the lessons they learned while under Mr. Booth's instruction.

Following the retirement of Mr. Booth the school suffered a serious loss by the death of Miss S. A. Pickup, a most conscientious teacher, and a woman of much spiritual power. She died in April, 1900. It was her great delight to pit the girls of her class against the boys of Mr. Heald's class, with regard to attendance and contributions to the school funds on "Three-o'clock days." It acted as a spur to the girls to be told by the teacher that Mr. Heald's class had been counted on a particular Sunday morning, and the attendance was better than Miss Pickup's class. An effort was made to turn the tables. And when the girls did come there was frequently a lesson drawn out of her own rich experience—a lesson which was destined to make a deep impression upon her hearers.

Following Miss Pickup's death Mr. Eli Llewellyn, brother-in-law of Mr. Thomas Brandreth, passed away. Mr. Llewellyn had been a teacher in the school for many years,

but failing health had compelled his retirement some time before. He was one of those quiet workers chiefly remembered for regular and punctual attendance, and for faithful discharge of the work which he felt capable of undertaking.

While the school was undoubtedly made weaker by the withdrawal or death of some members of the teaching staff, the law of compensation balanced matters by the appointment of new teachers. On April 14, 1901, Miss Mary Champness was appointed a fully-accredited teacher, and was placed in charge of the Young Ladies' Class. Her unique personality immediately made itself felt. It was seen that Miss Champness was at once a great power in the school. Her lessons were full of life, and the class became larger than it had ever been, many former scholars coming back to school. Unfortunately, owing to the illness of her mother, Miss Champness was only able to continue at school about four years, but after the death of her beloved parent she returned to the work, and was as successful as before. She formed a Society Class, and the work begun on the Sabbath was continued and developed on the Tuesday evening. This class is also a large one. Owing to her solicitude for her father's health, Miss Champness felt compelled, in 1912, to again retire from her class, to the intense regret of the members and her own great grief. The two classes showed their esteem by presenting their teacher and leader with a gold watch bracelet. While Miss Champness ceased to be on the regular teaching staff, she supplied as occasion arose, and her visits were always keenly appreciated.

The health of Mr. Rigby, the superintendent, was very indifferent during 1900, and he was absent from school almost the whole of that year and part of the next. The climate of Stockport did not suit him, and he made a long stay at Harrogate, which seemed to agree so well with his constitution that frequent visits to that Yorkshire watering-place were afterwards made, and the town has now become his home. During the long absence of the superintendent, the chairmanship of the teachers' meetings was undertaken by the visitors, who were quite willing to

undertake the added responsibility providing Mr. Rigby consented to remain at the head. On his return to the school in June, 1901, Mr. Rigby received the hearty congratulations of his fellow-workers on his restoration to health, and the hope was then expressed that the attractions of beautiful Harrogate would not be sufficient to lure him away permanently from Stockport. He was presented with a silver card case, suitably inscribed, as a token of the goodwill of the officers and teachers.

The removal of Mr. Arthur Wilson from Stockport, referred to previously, meant perforce his giving up the secretaryship to the Juvenile Foreign Missionary Committee, a position he had filled with conspicuous success for about six years. He imparted a freshness to the reports, and exhibited an enthusiasm for the cause of missions which had the effect of enlisting a large number of collectors and a consequent increase of income—an increase which was maintained all the time he held office. On his departure the duties of secretary were undertaken by Mr. Sydney R. Bainbridge, who was joined a year later as co-secretary by Mr. A. A. Barratt. Business claims took Mr. Bainbridge away from Stockport for a time, and Mr. Barratt was joined by Mr. Frank Horsfall. From 1902 Mr. Barratt held the office alone, and is deserving of all praise for the close attention he paid to this very important branch of the work of the Church. Sunday after Sunday he might have been seen in the Library Room, receiving the moneys from the collectors, and offering a word of encouragement when any of his young helpers gave indication of despondency on account of apparent lack of success. During Mr. Barratt's secretaryship two beautiful silk banners were given to the Circuit Missionary Committee by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Aston, of Wilmslow. These banners were to be awarded annually—one to the school collecting the largest amount for foreign missions, the other to the school collecting the largest amount per scholar. On each banner were a number of scrolls ready to be embroidered with the name of the successful school. The banner for the largest total found its second lodging-

place at Brentnall Street; and on several succeeding occasions the banner was simply taken down from the wall, the name "Trinity" emblazoned on another scroll, and then was returned to occupy its accustomed place over the main entrance to the large room. But, as nothing seems to be permanent in this changing world, the time came when another school obtained the right to have its name on the roll of fame by raising a larger sum than Brentnall Street; and in 1912 Cheadle Hulme achieved the apparently impossible distinction of winning both banners. However, Brentnall Street solaced itself by the fact that the majority of the scrolls bore the name "Trinity." It is not too much to say that this result was in large measure due to the unflagging zeal of Mr. Barratt. In 1912, owing to a re-arrangement of the various offices in the senior section of the missionary work, Mr. Barratt became secretary of Trinity branch, a position of greater responsibility, but one which he was qualified to fill by virtue of his apprenticeship at the school. Mr. J. J. Robertson was the next secretary, but the claims of his profession prevented his holding the reins more than twelve months.

Following Mr. Robertson, the office devolved, in 1913, upon Mr. Richard Barratt, brother of Mr. A. A. Barratt. The younger man had learned his duties by assisting his brother for several years, and entered upon his onerous task well equipped to discharge the responsible work. Soon after the great war broke out in 1914 Mr. Richard Barratt joined the Army, and his place was taken by Mr. Fred Taylor, who, however, soon followed Mr. Barratt's example and became a soldier. The secretaryship was then undertaken by Mr. Leslie Halliday and Miss Edith Jackson, but before many months had elapsed Mr. Halliday had also donned the uniform of the King.

The coronation of King Edward VII. was appointed to take place in June, 1902, and the excitement caused by the King's sudden illness, and the consequent postponement of the great event, are still fresh in the public mind. The arrangements for suitably recognising so auspicious

an occasion as the crowning of a King had been made throughout the country, and in almost every case Coronation Day, as originally chosen, was observed as though nothing had occurred to mar the pleasure such proceedings were intended to engender. In the case of Brentnall Street, a committee was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Thomas Rothwell, John Bennett, Samuel Hill, William Oliver, Thomas Hill, and Joseph Stretch. The demonstration was held on Saturday, June 28, 1902, in a field lent by Mr. John Fallows, of Bramhall Grange Farm. Before proceeding to the field all the scholars partook of an excellent tea in the school. The following was the programme and order of procession:—

HYMNS SUNG BY THE SCHOLARS IN FRONT OF THE
SCHOOL.

“God save the King,”
“God bless our native land.”

ORDER OF PROCESSION.

Ministers of Trinity Circuit,
Office-bearers of Trinity Chapel,
Gentlemen of the Congregation,
Ladies of the Congregation,
Hazel Grove Band,
Banner of the School,
Superintendent and Visitors of the School,
Scholars.

The processionists halted at the house of Mr. Rigby and sang the hymns “Praise to God, Whose bounteous hand,” and “O King of kings.” At the conclusion of the day’s proceedings every scholar and teacher was presented with an earthenware beaker (a cup without handle) which had been provided through the generosity of the superintendent, Mr. Rigby. Over seven hundred of these cups were distributed. The inscription on the cup read as follows: “Coronation Souvenir. Presented by S. Rigby, Esq., J.P., superintendent, Brentnall Street Wesleyan Sunday School, Stockport.” In a great number of cases these mementoes have been carefully preserved, and will

become increasingly valuable, at any rate to the recipients, as the years go by.

In 1904 a proposal was made in the teachers' meeting to allow certain representatives from the senior classes to have a seat and vote in the meeting. Although the date is comparatively recent, those who proposed what was then considered by some to be a revolutionary change were in advance of their time. The alteration in the constitution of the teachers' meeting was not acceptable at that date, though with the passing of a few more years not only has the contemplated inclusion of scholars been brought about, but other elected representatives now have a seat on the governing body of the school, a thing which would have caused some perturbation in days gone by.

The centenary of the British and Foreign Bible Society was observed in the school on Sunday, March 6, 1904. The event, happily, was one in which nearly every branch of the Christian Church could join, and the opportunity thus presented of placing the work and claims of the Society before the people was eagerly seized upon by thousands of preachers and teachers throughout the country. At Brentnall Street a special address was delivered by Mr. William Swindells, and a collection taken on behalf of the funds of the Society.

Mr. Samuel Rhodes, one of the visitors, passed away in December, 1903. He had been ill for several months, and consequently only attended school at irregular periods, but his death came as a great shock to his colleagues. He shared the characteristic of many who had held the office of visitor, in that he was regular and punctual in attendance, patient and plodding, and had a deep desire to see the spiritual advancement of the scholars. During the illness of Mr. Rhodes, another visitor, Mr. James Howard, was brought near to Death's door by illness. Mr. Howard was taken to the Infirmary for an operation; and on the first Sunday after his release from that institution he was at school, looking very pale and weak. Although it was not his turn to open school, he asked permission to speak to the scholars from the desk; and

at the conclusion of his short address he returned thanks to Almighty God for His merciful care during the preceding weeks.

At the following annual meeting, in March, 1904, Mr. Joseph Stretch, the teacher of the Young Men's Senior Class, was elected a visitor in place of the late Mr. Rhodes. Mr. Stretch came to the school as a boy, and in 1876 was promoted to teaching. On looking at the minute book one is struck by the number of committees to which Mr. Stretch was appointed—a work which generally entails an amount of drudgery not always appreciated by those who do not accept this particular kind of office. In a large school much of the detail work has of necessity to be first considered in the committee-room, and Mr. Stretch's record in that direction, both as regards his attendance and the work accomplished, has been most valuable. Owing to a change in business Mr. Stretch, while still a teacher, was compelled to remove a considerable distance on the opposite side of Stockport, and this led to his withdrawal from the work of teaching for a few years. In 1895 he returned, and having again joined the teaching staff, at once entered upon the activities of the school, and continued to manifest the same interest in all that concerned the life of the scholars, as he had done during his former membership. He later became associated with Mr. Rigby in the leadership of the Society Class which was established as the outcome of the mission at Trinity conducted by the Rev. William Hunt.

Mr. Rigby was now residing for a considerable portion of each year at Harrogate. He did not enjoy good health at Stockport, and the Yorkshire spa evidently supplying that which the smoke-laden atmosphere of a manufacturing town failed to give, one is not surprised that Mr. Rigby should prefer to be healthy at Harrogate rather than ailing at Stockport. But this temporary exile had one great disadvantage. Mr. Rigby was the superintendent, and the teachers' meeting did not desire any change, even though he was not able to be present every Sunday. While the affection of the teachers thus mani-

fested was greatly appreciated by Mr. Rigby, that gentleman said he would only accept office if a deputy were appointed. Accordingly, Mr. Horsfall was elected to take charge of the school in the absence of the superintendent. This arrangement, however, only lasted for one year. Mr. Rigby definitely retired from the superintendency in March, 1905, Messrs. Horsfall and Howard becoming co-superintendents. To mark their appreciation of the services of Mr. Rigby, the teachers' meeting appointed him honorary president for life. This office, which was specially created for the occasion, was one which would appeal to Mr. Rigby far more than any material testimonial could have done. It marked a determination to retain hold of one whose life was so intimately bound up with the present school; one who had endeared himself by countless acts to the scholars and teachers; and whose personality and influence still counted for so much. In thus giving up the actual superintendency, Mr. Rigby did not cease to interest himself in the special occasions during the year. He made journeys from Harrogate to preside at the afternoon service of the anniversary; he joined in the festivities of the field treat at Mr. Fallows's farm; the flower service still gave him as great delight as in former years, and he was as busy as the rest of the workers on the day previous, decorating the school with plants, many of which came from his conservatory at Bramhall Mount (his home in Bramhall Lane, which he maintained for some years after his virtual retirement to Harrogate); and it was still his great privilege and pleasure to act as host and chairman at the annual parents' party, the cost of which he had generously defrayed every year it had been held since the lamented death of Mr. William Hooley.

At the annual meeting which appointed Mr. Rigby to the honorary presidency of the school, Mr. Matthew Swindells was appointed a visitor. His name had then been on the school roll as a scholar and teacher for forty-seven years. The new visitor, in accepting office, seemed to be maintaining a family tradition. His father (Mr.

Thomas Swindells) was appointed a visitor in 1860; his uncle (Mr. Henry Mellor) elected a visitor in 1846; and his grandfather (Mr. Joseph Mellor) was appointed a visitor in 1834, and superintendent in 1843. There are possibly other families with a record such as this, but they cannot be very numerous—even if the country be taken as a whole. The officers appointed at the annual meeting in March, 1905, then read:

Honorary President: Mr. SAMUEL RIGBY.

Superintendents:

Mr. ABRAHAM HORSFALL, Mr. JAMES HOWARD.

Visitors:

Mr. JOSEPH STRETCH, Mr. MATTHEW SWINDELLS,
Mr. JOSEPH HALLWORTH (Infant Room).

Mr. Horace Leah retired from the secretaryship at the close of 1904. Mr. Leah's period of duty had been characterised by an earnest desire to make his department as efficient as possible, and had set an example to those who should follow him.

During the year 1905 the school was deprived of the services of Mr. Joseph Mellor, who retired from the secretaryship, an office which he had held from 1880. Mr. Mellor's tenure as secretary was longer than that of any of his predecessors, Mr. James Davenport coming next with twenty-one years. The vacancies caused by the retirement of the two secretaries were filled by the appointment of Mr. Thomas Brown, junr., with Mr. W. Arnold Williams as assistant. Mr. Brown's father and mother had been scholars in the school years before; and while his early boyhood had been spent at Denton, he was on ground familiar to his family when he returned to Brentnall Street. Mr. Brown held office until the annual meeting of 1914, when he expressed his wish to retire. His colleague in the secretaryship, Mr. Arnold Williams, was a scholar in the Young Men's Class when he was selected for his responsible task. His good humour and bright and happy disposition won him many friends. He was the life of any social gathering; and a blindfolded

man need not have been told that Mr. Williams was present in a party—his laugh or the laughter of his friends would have proclaimed the fact. He added to his other duties the joint secretaryship of the Band of Hope, and in this department he infused much spirit. It was his custom to take part in the Christmas entertainments, and the young people generally looked forward to that part of the programme which contained the name of Mr. Williams. General regret was expressed when a business engagement took him to London. The exile was only temporary, for, shortly after his return to Stockport, he was again appointed to the secretaryship, in succession to Mr. Brown, his old colleague.

At the annual meeting of the Committee and teachers in March, 1906, Messrs. Horsfall and Howard retired from the superintendency, and the name of Mr. Sam Harrop was submitted for the approval of the meeting. Mr. Harrop was one of the few appointed to labour in the school who received training elsewhere. His youth and early manhood were spent in the Grosvenor Street Circuit, Manchester; but he had not been resident in Stockport long before it was discovered that he had a deep interest in Sunday school work. His introduction to Brentnall Street was through the Young Men's Class, which he was often invited to address on Sunday afternoons. His nomination as superintendent met with the approval of the teachers, and the Sunday following the annual meeting he assumed office. He at once entered upon the work with much vigour and earnestness. Genial and courteous to all, the youngest teacher could approach him with a suggestion or request, feeling absolutely certain of a friendly hearing. He delighted in young life, and had a fund of interesting children's stories, which he used to advantage in his addresses from the desk. These addresses, by the way, were often notable for their originality, both in matter and in the form in which they were presented. Mr. Harrop proved himself a "strong" man, and quickly had the whole-hearted sympathy and support of his colleagues. They were willing

to follow where he led. It was his great pleasure, during his superintendency, to receive the beautiful silk missionary banner presented to the Circuit by Mr. and Mrs. Aston.

After holding office for about eighteen months, Mr. Harrop removed to Chelford, near Crewe. The announcement of his impending retirement was received with much regret, and an expression of this feeling was publicly made at a meeting of Committee and teachers held in the Band Room of Trinity Chapel. The thanks of the meeting were offered to Mr. Harrop by the Rev. James Halliday, superintendent minister. While Mr. Harrop's tenure of the superintendency was only a short one, his influence and his kindliness of character will not soon be forgotten by those who were privileged to be associated with him in the work of training the young. Mr. Harrop severed his official connection with the school on Sunday, September 22, 1907. The newly-appointed minister (the Rev. W. Marshman Spencer) was present at the afternoon service, and wished God-speed to the retiring superintendent and his family. Mr. Harrop gave a beautiful address of thanks to all those who had endeavoured, with him, to make the school a success.

The annual meeting of 1906 was noticeable for one or two more changes among the officers, besides the appointment of Mr. Harrop. Mr. Horsfall did not desire any office, and retired from the school, after a connection extending over thirty years; Mr. James Howard became a visitor once again; and Mr. Samuel Hill was elected a visitor in place of Mr. Joseph Hallworth, who had retired during the previous year. Mr. Hill's special work was to take charge of the Infant Room. A high standard had been set up by the two previous superintendents in the present school. At the time of Mr. Hill's appointment in 1906 the school had been opened thirty-seven years, and during that period there had only been two Infant Room superintendents, Mr. James Davenport and Mr. Hallworth—a sufficient indication, one would think, that they, at any rate, had been happy in the work. Mr. Hill retained



Mr. John Lingard



Mr. William Swindells



Mr. Sam Harrop



Mr. Thomas Rothwell



Mr. James H. Hallworth

office until the whole system of infant school teaching was revised, and the Primary Department took the place of the method which had been in vogue for very many years.

In November, 1906, a decision was arrived at which, the writer remembers, caused very little comment at the time, but which really marked the closing of a most important chapter of school history. In the month referred to the Committee, on the recommendation of the teachers' meeting, decided to dispose of the library. The history of the library goes back to the early years of the school, to the time when books were few, and when those who possessed the ability to read were almost fewer. And what books they were in those early libraries! One wonders that they were ever taken home by any of the scholars, no matter how eager they may have been to acquire knowledge. We have the record of a library committee in 1833. In 1848 Mr. James Mellor (father of Mr. Joseph Mellor, the school secretary of a later day) was appointed librarian in conjunction with Mr. Henry Moseley. The Library Tea Meeting, sometimes called the "October Tea Treat," was begun in 1850, and it is noteworthy that Mr. William Hooley's first committee appointment was to manage this particular social event. In the early 'sixties Mr. Henry Finney and Mr. Joseph Harter were in office as librarians. In 1868 Mr. John Barrett was appointed to succeed Mr. Finney. Mr. Barrett held the position for five years, which was rather longer than the average tenure of the other librarians. Following the retirement of Mr. Harter, Mr. Thomas Brown took up the work, with Mr. Harry Lomax as his colleague.

In 1875 Mr. James Bourne was appointed to superintend the library, with Mr. Samuel Hill and Mr. Joseph Booth as his assistants. Mr. Booth held office for a few years, and was succeeded by Mr. Joseph Stretch in 1880. In the latter year Mr. Frank Davenport joined Mr. Hill, and four years later Mr. Hill retired from the position, having devoted himself to this particular branch of the school's work for nine years.

Mr. James Harrop was Mr. Hill's successor in 1884. The duties of the office next fell upon Mr. Thomas Rothwell, who assumed responsibility in 1888. About this time there were several discussions in the teachers' meetings as to the advisability of discontinuing the library. An examination of the bookshelves had revealed a plentiful supply of antique volumes, but not such as would be sought by a bibliophile. Mr. Robert Mellor was appointed librarian, with Mr. William Hague and Mr. G. F. Leah as his assistants, and there was a complete overhauling of the books, and new volumes were purchased to replace those cast out. For some years following, however, little use was made of the library. In 1902 Mr. Samuel Oldham was asked to ascertain if there was any desire on the part of the scholars to use the books; and the result of his experience was a recommendation to close the library and dispose of the contents. This advice was accepted—though not without extreme regret—and the following committee carried out the resolution of the teachers' meeting, namely, Messrs. S. Rigby, S. Harrop, James Howard, Joseph Stretch, M. Swindells, S. Hill, F. Davenport, W. Swindells, and S. Oldham. The old books of the school having been dispersed, the shelves were now without tenants—but not for long. On the death of the Rev. John Martin, a most beloved supernumerary minister, his executors offered his library to the local preachers and Christian workers of the circuit; and these books are now stored in the school.

Two old workers in the school passed away in 1907. The first was Mr. George Moores, who was a teacher in the old school, and who, on the opening of the present building, was appointed caretaker. For over thirty years he had charge of the school premises, and his face was as familiar to the scholars as that of any visitor or teacher. Small of stature, with an expression the very reverse of fierce, he yet proved himself a "terror to the (youthful) evil-doer." Sometimes a harassed teacher, almost driven to despair by the exuberance of spirit shown by the class, would threaten to "fetch Mr. Moores." The caretaker

would occasionally step into a classroom, when the scholars seemed to be getting out of hand, and his promise to put some unruly boy in the cellar unless he improved his conduct often carried far greater weight than if the teacher had summoned the superintendent and visitors. He had retired from work for some years, when one day he fell and dislocated one of his limbs. He never seemed the same afterwards, and his death occurred in March, 1907.

Mr. James Howard died on Monday, August 5, 1907, at his residence, Hempshaw Lane, Stockport, at the age of sixty-six. He had not been in good health since his return from the Manchester Infirmary (mentioned previously), and for six weeks prior to his death he had been confined to his bed. The funeral took place on the following Thursday, and was attended by Mr. Rigby, Mr. Sam Harrop, Mr. A. Horsfall, and by visitors and teachers from the school. After the interment several friends had tea in the Band Room of Trinity Chapel, and many expressions of Mr. Howard's worth and regret at his decease were made by those in the room. Mr. Howard was the last of those in active work in the present school who received their teachers' commission in old Brentnall Street. Mr. Rigby was a teacher in the old school, but at the time of Mr. Howard's death he had become *honorary* superintendent—honorary in the sense that he had ceased to take an actual part in the management of the School; whereas Mr. Howard was on the *active* list of visitors.

As was only to be expected from one who had been connected with the school for nearly fifty years, Mr. Howard often spoke with affection of those who had been associated with him in his younger days. He was not greatly in favour of innovations, either in the arrangement of the school building, or in the curriculum. He held his own opinions, and when he formed a decision clung to it most tenaciously. For Mr. William Hooley he always entertained a profound respect; sometimes what he thought Mr. Hooley would have done in certain matters connected with the school was quite sufficient to guide him in his own course of action. When opening school,

especially on Sunday morning, he almost invariably chose one of the psalms as a lesson. One of his favourite hymns was

Jesu, Saviour, wilt Thou hear us
Now we come to sing to Thee?
Wilt Thou in Thy love draw near us
While our praise we bring to Thee?

For the last six years of his life Mr. Howard was co-leader of a Society Class with Mr. Rigby. In his attention to the work he had in hand, and in his punctuality and regularity, Mr. Howard showed an example to others. One Sunday afternoon a few weeks later a memorial service was held in the school. Mr. Rigby read a memoir, prepared by himself, and also an appreciation from a lady who was one of Mr. Howard's scholars thirty years previously.

On the resignation of Mr. Sam Harrop in August, 1907, Messrs. Joseph Stretch and Matthew Swindells were appointed superintendents until the ensuing annual meeting. In the following March these two gentlemen were duly installed in the superintendency, and continued so to act during the next four years. At this meeting Messrs. William Swindells and William Martin Gray were elected visitors. Mr. W. Swindells at that time was the teacher of the Young Men's Class, and Mr. Gray the teacher of the Young Women's Class. Mr. Gray came to the school on the resignation of Miss Champness, and for four years had devoted himself assiduously to conserving the splendid work which that gifted lady had been able to accomplish among the elder girls of the school. Mr. Gray was not new to Sunday school work when he came to Brentnall Street. He had received a training at Manchester and other places, and, as was only natural, sometimes looked at things from a different standpoint from those whose life had been spent in the one school. During his visitorship he also became treasurer of the school funds, and handled this work in a business-like and altogether satisfactory manner. Mr. Gray did not limit his activities to Sunday school labour; for he took a full share of work

as a local preacher, and his pulpit ministrations were very acceptable. In June, 1911, business compelled his removal to Hull, and this necessarily led to his retirement from the work at Brentnall Street. His transference to the seaport town, however, provided another opportunity to show his interest in Sunday school work, and before long he had been elected superintendent. On his subsequent removal to Manchester he again applied himself to instructing the young, and at Whalley Range found a sphere in which he continued to exercise his gifts.

In June, 1908, the school received a handsome gift in the form of a portrait of Mr. William Hooley. This oil painting was formerly the property of Mrs. Thomas Bayley, and on that lady's death, Mr. H. A. Johnstone, who was interested in the administration of her estate, was convinced that no better place for the portrait could be found than the schoolroom over which Mr. Hooley was wont to preside. The executors generously fell in with the suggestion which Mr. Johnstone laid before them, and very largely, if not mainly, owing to that gentleman's instrumentality, a very striking likeness of Mr. Hooley now hangs on the walls of the large room.

Since Trinity Chapel was opened no minister has preached the School Sermons so often as the Rev. David J. Waller, who, when he first came in 1891, had not received his honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. Dr. Waller's preaching was of a vigorous type, and gained him many friends both at school and chapel. In 1895 he was again the special preacher, and came for each anniversary for the next ten years. In 1906 Dr. Waller was prevented by serious illness from fulfilling his engagement, and the Rev. James Hope Moulton took his place. In the following March Dr. Waller was able to take his accustomed place, though, when he appeared in the pulpit, it was plain to be seen that disease had made very serious inroads upon his vitality. It had been Mr. Rigby's practice, as host of the minister, to invite the officials of the school to meet the preacher at supper on the evening of the anniversary Sunday. When Mr. Rigby invited

Dr. Waller to again come in 1908, the preacher replied, "I don't know whether I ought to accept the invitation of the teachers. You know I am now getting an old man ; and I am not as well as I used to be." Mr. Rigby said, "Well, shall we say 'D.V.' then?" Dr. Waller replied, "Yes, let it be 'D.V.' " Altogether, Dr. Waller preached fifteen anniversary sermons for Brentnall Street, and when he passed away in August, 1911, none mourned the loss of a friend more sincerely than the boys and girls at Stockport who had listened to him once a year at the most impressionable period of their lives.



CHAPTER IX.

THE very large measure of success which attended the Infant Room teaching under the superintendents already mentioned would almost preclude, one would think, the idea of much improvement being suggested. But nothing seems permanent in this world. The idea was slowly becoming general among Sunday school workers in the country that if the movement was to make progress, or even to maintain the position already won, changes would have to take place both in buildings, equipment, and method of teaching. Educational reformers were drawing attention to the fact that it was well-nigh impossible to have a large Sunday school, composed of scholars of, say, eight years of age to men and women of middle-age, and to expect that one address would suit the scholars of such varying ages. There are some men who possess the power to hold the attention of an entire school while giving an address; but men of such genius are rare. What actually happens is that frequently one-half the scholars may be greatly interested, while the other half is bored. The remedy suggested, and acted upon in an increasing number of cases, is to "grade" or "group" the schools in suitable divisions, where there will not be a sharp contrast in the mental capacities of the scholars in the same sections. This idea of seeking to obtain the interest of the scholars is still further developed by the provision of writing and drawing materials, the use of models to illustrate Biblical teaching, and the supply of diagrams, maps, and pictures to aid the teacher in giving the lesson.

The first step towards "grading" at Brentnall Street was taken in July, 1909, when, on the recommendation of the Rev. W. Marshman Spencer, superintendent minister, Mr. Joseph Stretch, superintendent, and Mr. William Swindells, visitor, were deputed to visit schools where the

new system had been adopted, and report to a committee, who were instructed to make recommendations to the teachers' meeting. This committee consisted of Misses Champness, R. Billingham, F. Jackson, Messrs. C. Garrett and A. A. Barrett, along with the officers. The deputation visited Cheadle Hulme Wesleyan School, and were so impressed with the Primary Department there that they recommended the adoption of the method at Brentnall Street instead of the Infants' Department then existing. The recommendation was accepted by the teachers' meeting, and the scheme put into operation on the first Sunday in 1910. The system displaced was one which had been in vogue since the school opened its doors. Under this system there had been many happy times in the Infant Room. The teachers were so comfortable in the work that they rarely wished to be promoted to the upper room, and frequently expressed a desire to remain in the room downstairs, even at the expense of allowing a junior to be advanced over their heads. The new system which was now adopted involved a new name. Instead of speaking of the "Infant Room," it became necessary to use the term "Primary Department," and although the scheme has now been in operation a few years, some of the teachers find a difficulty in dropping the use of the old designation.

The method of conducting the Primary Department is altogether different from that which prevailed under the old system. The first point that would strike a visitor is that the superintendents are young ladies, and the teachers much younger than those formerly appointed. Very few words of command are given or needed. Instead, a few notes struck on the piano are sufficient indication to the children of what is required, and the chords answer the same purpose as the bugle-calls in the army. Music plays a prominent part in the organisation of the Primary Department, even the collection being taken while the children are marching in procession, and singing "Hear the pennies dropping." Everything is done to induce the child to take an interest in what is going on. He is not

expected simply to sit still and be talked to, but may talk to the teacher during lesson-time—if his conversation is helping to obtain information or impart instruction to others. Then there are ten teachers where formerly four did the work, consequently the classes are much smaller. The first superintendents of the Primary Department were the daughter of the superintendent minister, Miss E. A. Spencer, who was herself a Kindergarten mistress in a girls' day college; and Miss Dorothy Ramskill, an elementary day school teacher, and daughter of Mr. J. L. Ramskill, one of the local preachers of Trinity Circuit. The school was thus fortunate in securing the services of two young ladies who had some experience of child-life from an educational standpoint. The first junior teachers appointed were Misses Marguerite Hick, Marjory Wood, Annie Rothwell, Norah Lingard, Bessie Bell, Hilda Gray, Mabel Bennett, and Edith Jackson. On the completion of his term as superintendent minister in 1911, the Rev. W. M. Spencer removed to Pendleton, and this removal meant the resignation of Miss Spencer from the Primary Department, much to the regret of her colleagues, and of the officers of the school. The vacancy thus created was filled by the appointment of Miss I. Jenkins. The hopes entertained when the Primary Department was established have not been disappointed, and the capacity of the room has frequently been taxed by the large number of children in attendance.

In June, 1910, Mr. John Jones, the assistant master of the day school, came to the Sunday school as secretary, in place of Mr. Arnold Williams, who, as previously mentioned, had received a business appointment in London. Mr. Jones had been appointed secretary to the Committee, in succession to Mr. Thomas Brown, junr. It was owing to Mr. Jones's suggestion that the title "general secretary" was adopted at the annual meeting in March, 1911. At this meeting Mr. Samuel J. Oliver was also elected a school secretary, his colleague being Mr. Thomas Brown, junr. Mr. Oliver was a scholar in the senior class on his appointment, but previously he had served a term as teacher.

He has already given evidence of a capacity for close application to the duties of his position, and invariably places his personal inclinations in a secondary position where the interests of the school are concerned.

At the annual teachers' meeting, held in March, 1911, Mr. Thomas Rothwell was elected a visitor, and he has the distinction of being the last one to be appointed, for the office was abolished on the adoption of Conference legislation for the government of Sunday schools in the following December. Previous to his election Mr. Rothwell had for a time been a teacher of the Senior Class of young men, with Mr. William Swindells as his colleague. He had been a teacher in almost every class on the boys' side, and was a great favourite with all his scholars. His interest in temperance work has been well sustained throughout many years, and as president of Brentnall Street Band of Hope he has rendered services which are remembered with gratitude. His addresses in the large room have always been listened to with great attention, for they have invariably been delivered in a lively manner, and with plenty of illustrations for the young people. Mr. Rothwell has not confined his activities to any one branch of the school's work, however; wherever there was work to be done, there he would be found.

A notable indication of the modern desire for the improvement of Sunday schools is shown in the large and increasing number of conferences of teachers, which are held for the exchange of views among the workers themselves and the promulgation of the opinions of experts—men and women of standing in the educational world, who give ungrudgingly of their time and talents, in order that the Sunday school and Church may benefit. In nearly every discussion the conclusion arrived at is the same—the *teacher* is the crux of the question. A superintendent may be a genius, but if his teachers are not with him he is well-nigh impotent. Similarly, a school may be well equipped with the latest lesson-helps in the way of books, maps, illustrative objects, and so on; but if the teachers have not the necessary training in the use of these things,

the "helps" provided will not be used to the best advantage. It is no uncommon experience for a superintendent to notice a teacher's despondency at apparent lack of success, or even to receive a resignation because of admitted failure. The reason of failure in many cases is not that the teacher has been careless in the preparation of the lesson, but, owing to lack of knowledge of the working of the child's mind, the lesson has not been presented with the skill necessary to hold the attention of the juvenile audience. These remarks are prompted by a circumstance which took place at the Sunday School Anniversary of 1911. The preacher on that occasion was the Rev. J. Williams Butcher, Secretary of the Connexional Sunday School Department. On the Saturday evening preceding the anniversary Sunday Mr. Butcher delivered a lecture on "Why we Grade: A Study in Child Psychology," in which he pointed out many mistakes perpetrated under the old system of Sunday school teaching, and outlined the advantages which would accrue from the adoption of newer methods. One outcome of this lecture was the formation of a Teacher-training Class in the school. Mr. J. W. Walgate, the headmaster of the Day School, was so impressed by the remarks of Mr. Butcher, that he said if suitable arrangements could be made he would offer his services as leader of such a class. The offer was accepted, Mr. Walgate returned to the School as a teacher, and in the course of the next few weeks the class had been formed. The students meet regularly on Sunday afternoon, and a two years' course of study is undertaken by the prospective teachers. The superintendent does not call upon these young people, even for an occasional supply. At the end of each half-year an examination is conducted by the Connexional Sunday School Department, and the student who gains the necessary marks at all the examinations is awarded a teacher's diploma, a distinction to be coveted, and prized when obtained. The first diploma to be received at Brentnall Street was awarded to Miss Dorothy Rothwell, who received many congratulations when her success was

announced. Since then Miss Lily Sidebotham and Miss Dorothy Moyle have also secured the diploma.

Reference has been made several times to the "Committee" as the governing body of the school. On the establishment of the first Wesleyan Methodist School in Stockport in 1810 the institution was placed under the management of a body of gentlemen very largely drawn from the principal subscribers. The teachers, as such, had little to do with the government of the school. When schools were multiplied, the management was still vested in the Central Committee, but an amount of local government obtained in each school, and this relieved the Committee of much detail work, which really could be much better done by those on the spot and who were engaged in the actual work Sunday after Sunday. The essential connection between the several schools and the Committee was maintained by gentlemen who made periodical visits to each school, noted their progress, advised the respective superintendents when such advice was sought, and afterwards presented their reports to the Committee. The gentlemen making these visits were designated "visitors." The question has frequently been asked how this particular name came to be adopted; and the opinion has sometimes been expressed that the original appointment was for the purpose of visiting absentee scholars. The writer believes the above explanation to be the correct one. Moreover, it will be noticed, on reference to the rule which was formed (in 1784) for the government of the first Stockport schools, that "two subscribers should visit each school, and report to the Committee." That seems to have been the genesis of the office of visitor. Nowadays, in some schools, the visitor may be one who visits particular classes, and then reports to the superintendent; but this would seem to be a development—using men of experience to do work which was suitable to the senior officers of a particular school. In process of time it appears that visitors became attached more to one school than another, probably by reason of proximity of residence, and we find gentlemen being appointed visitors of one

school only. The office then became one of assistant to the superintendent. The "superintendent and visitors" became a kind of Cabinet Council, with a teachers' meeting once a month, and the Central Committee exercising control over the financial arrangements. From the old minute books at Brentnall Street we learn that the superintendent and visitors were sometimes elected by the Committee, and at other times chosen by the teachers' meetings. There was also a general superintendent of all the Wesleyan Schools in the Circuit, whose duty was very similar to that formerly undertaken by the first visitors. Mr. William Bradley seems to have been the last of the general superintendents. By the middle of the 'seventies each school appears to have had its own government of Committee and teachers' meeting, entirely independent so far as its internal management was concerned, but, of course, being linked up in a Connexional manner with the rest of the Circuit.

For many years Brentnall Street was managed by a Committee and the teachers' meeting, a system which sometimes resulted in overlapping, for the sphere of each was only loosely defined. The Committee was responsible for the raising of the revenue, although the teachers worked assiduously to maintain, by their own contributions and collections at the anniversaries, the standard of income. The Committee nominated most of the officers of the school, and these nominations were sent to the teachers' meeting for confirmation. Unfortunately, the records of the proceedings of the Committee are not very full, and incidental references in the school minute books do not convey much information as to the working of the governing body.

In looking over records of the past forty years one comes across a succession of names of men of a generation which is now disappearing. There are not many survivors of the prominent workers who strove to develop the school during the 'seventies. A noteworthy fact is that the changes in the committee and its officers are very few. There are not many fresh names. That is a fact worthy

of remark. The same men continued to labour for the young people year in and year out. When Mr. Rigby was appointed superintendent in 1880 his successor in the secretaryship to the Committee was Mr. James Bourne, and he was followed in turn by Messrs. Joseph Mellor, John Lingard, Thomas Brown, junr., and John Jones. The treasurers during the same period have been Messrs. Joseph Moor, John Cragg, Isaac Linney Leigh, A. Horsfall, Samuel Rhodes, Thomas Brown, W. M. Gray, James Bell, and Donald D. Halliday. In 1898 the Committee became simply a finance committee, taking charge of the income and expenditure, and transferring to the teachers' meeting nearly all the duties which formerly had been done by the Committee, giving to the teachers a power which up to that time they had never possessed.

The Conference of 1911, however, adopted a scheme for the government of Methodist Sunday schools which superseded all the old rules and methods which had been in force up to that time, and will probably have a far-reaching effect. The intention of the promoters of this scheme was to replace the multiplicity of systems by one uniform system, and to link up in an effective manner each Methodist school, no matter how obscure, with every other Methodist school in the Circuit, the District, and the Connexion. This result is sought to be obtained by the formation of various Councils, each one connected in a vital manner with the other. The first is the Local Sunday School Council, which has control of each individual school. This Council consists of the minister, officers of the Sunday school, teachers who are seventeen years of age and upwards, and elected representatives from the Leaders' Meeting, Society Meeting, and elder scholars. The legislation provided that this Council should "have complete oversight and management of the Sunday school interests, taking up all the functions of the teachers' meeting and Sunday School Committee, as hitherto constituted." Local Sunday School Councils are linked up, on a representative basis, with the Circuit Councils, and they with the District Councils; and the whole body of

councils are joined together by the Connexional Sunday School Council, a body composed of some of the most eminent ministers and laymen in Methodism.

A joint meeting of Brentnall Street Committee and teachers was held at the school on December 20, 1911, under the chairmanship of the Rev. E. Wright Adcock, to consider the adoption of the Conference regulations. After a prolonged discussion the meeting decided to adopt the new scheme of government, and thus inaugurated a system which even those who are fully engaged in the work do not yet realise all the possibilities. There is now one governing authority in the school, on which all the workers have an equal voice and vote. There is also an elective representative element, a reform which many years ago was advocated by some teachers at Brentnall Street. All the appointments are now in the hands of the Council, and the full control of finance is also vested in that body. The first representatives to the Circuit Sunday School Council were Miss Tildesley, and Messrs. William Swindells and William Hague.

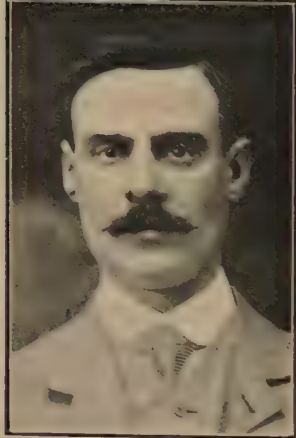
The coronation of King George and Queen Mary took place on Thursday, June 22, 1911. The officers and teachers had made elaborate preparations for celebrating the event. It had been decided to hold a tea in the school at half-past three in the afternoon of the following Saturday, afterwards to walk in procession to Mr. Fallows's field at Bramhall Grange Farm.

Unfortunately the day was exceedingly wet. There had been a steady downpour of rain for several hours, and outdoor festivities were entirely out of the question. A large number of scholars, however, assembled in the school after tea. Afterwards there were selections by the Hazel Grove Band, and songs by several scholars. The field sports and demonstration were postponed until a subsequent Saturday, when it was hoped the weather would be more propitious.

The postponed demonstration was held on Saturday afternoon, July 15, and this time the weather was beautiful. The scholars assembled at school at four o'clock, and,

preceded by the Hazel Grove Band, walked in procession to Bramhall Grange Farm, halting at the houses of Mr. Rigby and the Rev. Benjamin Smith to sing hymns. At Mr. Rigby's house big bills were posted announcing the sale by auction of the property. This caused many expressions of regret, both from teachers and scholars, for the appearance of the notice betokened the permanent removal of Mr. Rigby from Stockport. When the field was reached games were indulged in until dusk, and the prizes were distributed to the successful competitors by Mr. Rigby. A large number of old scholars and friends joined in the outdoor festivities, and the opinion expressed at the conclusion of the proceedings was that the event had been one of the most enjoyable field treats promoted by the school.

The coronation of the King and Queen was further celebrated by a special service held in the school on the afternoon of Sunday, June 25. By a pleasing coincidence the date almost exactly corresponded with the fiftieth anniversary of Mr. Rigby's association with the institution. A notable feature was the splendid attendance of the Young Women's Senior Class, which entirely filled the gallery at the west end of the school. Many former workers were present. Among these were Mr. H. A. Johnstone, Mr. Joseph Hallworth, Mr. Samuel Hill, Mr. Horace Leah, Mr. J. W. Yearsley, Mrs. Millward (Miss Axon), Mrs. Parkinson (Miss M. Ratcliffe), and others. The opening service was taken by Mr. Joseph Stretch, one of the superintendents. At half-past two Mr. Rigby began the heavy task of distributing over six hundred new Methodist Sunday School Hymnals, which he himself generously provided as a memento of the King's coronation and of his own jubilee. The books were beautifully prepared, and on the fly-leaf was a portrait of Mr. Rigby and the following inscription: "Bretnall Street Wesleyan Sunday School and Trinity Chapel, Stockport. Presented by Mr. Samuel Rigby, J.P., to commemorate the crowning of King George V., and also his own Jubilee in connection with the above-named



Mr. Horace B. Leah



Mr. Samuel J. Oliver



Mr. George Heald



Mr. Joseph Mellor



Mr. Thomas Brown



Mr. W. Arnold Williams

School. June, 1911." There was a keen desire to become possessed of the new book, which will, no doubt, be treasured when the recipients have grown old. The first to receive a book was Mr. Stretch. Then followed Mr. Matthew Swindells; and afterwards the visitors, Mr. William Swindells and Mr. Thomas Rothwell. The former workers next received each a copy, and were heartily greeted by the scholars as they walked to the platform. Then each class went forward in alphabetical order headed by the teacher—the senior class of young women, then the senior class of young men, finishing with the youngest class of boys.

When all had returned to their places, Mr. Rigby announced the first hymn from the new book, No. 614:

Land of our birth, we pledge to thee
Our love and toil in the years to be,—
When we are grown and take our place
As men and women with our race.

The scene was most inspiring when hundreds of young voices sang this hymn with great heartiness. Mr. Rigby then read a short account of his career in the school, and mentioned the names of some of the men and women he had known as workers, many of whom had then passed away. He spoke with much emotion of Mr. William Axon, whom he succeeded as Class-leader. At the death-bed of this saint he prayed, "Lord, let a double portion of the blessing which has rested upon Thy servant, rest upon me." He believed that prayer had been abundantly answered, and that through the answering of that prayer he had been made the man he was. The concluding hymn was No. 610:

To Thee, our God, we fly,
For mercy and for grace;
O hear our lowly cry,
And hide not Thou Thy face!
O Lord, stretch forth Thy mighty hand
And guard and bless our fatherland.

This brought to a close a most memorable afternoon, and one which will undoubtedly live in the memories of those who took part in the proceedings.

On the Thursday following the teachers' quarterly meeting was held, and it was then decided that official recognition should be made of Mr. Rigby's long connection with the school. A week or two later it was pointed out that three other workers had also celebrated "jubilees," namely, Mr. Joseph Hallworth, Mr. Samuel Hill, and Mr. Matthew Swindells. The two former had then retired from active work in the school, but the latter was still "in harness" as superintendent. It was decided that a re-union of old scholars and teachers should be promoted, and a presentation made to each of the gentlemen named. This instruction was handed on to the following committee, namely, Mr. Joseph Stretch, superintendent; Messrs. William Swindells and Thomas Rothwell, visitors; Messrs. John Jones and Thomas Brown, junr., secretaries; Misses Champness, Tildesley, and Turner; Messrs. F. Davenport, W. Hague, S. Oldham, H. A. Johnstone, James Bell, and Robert Mellor; and one representative from each senior class. Of this committee Mr. H. A. Johnstone was appointed chairman; Mr. William Swindells, treasurer; and Messrs. F. Davenport and John Jones, secretaries. Before long little companies of friends were at work searching old registers to discover the names of scholars who could then be traced, and to each a circular was sent, setting forth the objects of the presentation, and inviting subscriptions. Meanwhile the committee had decided to present each of the four workers with an illuminated address in album form, and a copy of the Revised Version of the Bible. It should be noted that Mr. Rigby had attended school fifty years as teacher and officer; while in the case of the other three gentlemen they had simply been *enrolled* fifty years, and part of that time they had been scholars. This fact, and the many distinguished and generous services which Mr. Rigby had rendered to the school, prompted the committee to commission Mr. F. Davenport Bates to paint the portrait of Mr. Rigby, and to add this as a gift to the latter gentleman along with the address and Bible.

The committee had not been at work long before it

became apparent that a far larger number of people wished to associate themselves with the movement than had been contemplated at the outset. Nearly every scholar in the school was a contributor. Subscriptions came from distant places in England; and old scholars and teachers in the United States and Canada sent not merely their money, but also letters of appreciation testifying to the value of the school upon their life.

The re-union was held in the Armoury, Greek Street, on Thursday, February 29, 1912, and was certainly one of the most remarkable demonstrations held in connection with Brentnall Street. There was a "platform" of fifty, and it was computed that there were over seven hundred of an audience. Mr. H. A. Johnstone was the chairman, and short speeches were delivered by Mr. S. Harrop, a former superintendent; Mr. George Heald, a former teacher and colleague of Mr. Rigby in the leadership of a Society Class; Mr. Thomas Rowbotham, of Bramhall; and Mr. Thomas Welch, of Lytham, another old visitor of the school.

The presentation to Mr. Samuel Hill was made by Mr. Joseph Stretch. Mr. Hill's reply was characteristically brief, and indicated one of the guiding principles of his life. He said he had only done his duty. He believed God had a work for all to do, and that work had, he felt convinced, been in the Sunday school for him. It had always been a pleasure and a duty combined to serve in the school.

Mr. Joseph Hallworth was, unfortunately, absent through domestic loss, and the presentation to him was received by his son, Mr. James H. Hallworth, the organist of the school. Mr. Robert Mellor made this presentation, and spoke of the time when he was Mr. Hallworth's colleague.

The presentation to Mr. Matthew Swindells was made by Mr. John Turner, a former superintendent. In his reply Mr. Swindells said that for over fifty years he had been able to attend Brentnall Street, and he was deeply

grateful for the privilege. He hoped the school would always maintain its usefulness and prove a blessing to all who attended it.

The illuminated address to Mr. Rigby, which, like those presented to the other three gentlemen, was a beautiful work of art, was in the following terms:—

BRENTNALL STREET
WESLEYAN SUNDAY SCHOOL.

To SAMUEL RIGBY, Esq., J.P.

Dear Mr. Rigby,—

We, the Officers, Teachers, Scholars, and Friends of the School, have learned with deep regret that you are leaving Stockport, and we cannot allow you to go without a fervent assurance from us of our esteem and regard for you.

You have completed fifty years of devoted service to the School as teacher, secretary, and superintendent, and all through the term your love for the young people has been true, and your self-denying labours for their benefit have never failed.

Your solicitude for the welfare of the boys, as they grew up to manhood, has endeared you to them and to all of us. Many young men—some of them now no longer young—will always have cause to bless God that they ever knew you and came under your loving care.

We shall not forget how dependent the School and Young Men's Institute have been upon your generous support.

We know you will remember us and give us a warm place in your heart, and we earnestly pray that the blessing of God may ever rest upon you, and that you may be long spared to continue the Master's work and to enjoy His favour.

We are, dear Mr. Rigby, on behalf of the Presentation Committee,

Yours affectionately,

H. A. JOHNSTONE, *Chairman*,

JOSEPH STRETCH
MATTHEW SWINDELLS } *Superintendents*,

WILLIAM SWINDELLS, *Treasurer*,

F. DAVENPORT } *Secretaries*.
JOHN JONES }

The presentation to Mr. Rigby of the address, Bible, and portrait was made by Mr. H. A. Johnstone, who, at the conclusion of a very happy speech, said to Mr. Rigby: "I have the honour to present you with your portrait. It is a token of our high esteem and hearts' affection. You have lived amongst us, and we, who know you best, honour you most. We have noted your blameless character and your generous heart, which always delighted in giving rather than receiving. We shall ever hold you in remembrance. May God bless you!"

When Mr. Rigby rose to reply the whole audience stood to greet him, a striking and spontaneous testimony of the great regard in which he is held. After expressing his thanks for the gifts, he said it was worth a great deal to know that his work had been appreciated; but he held that he had only done his duty, and that he had been rewarded as he had gone along. How many thousand blessings he had received at the hands of God! It had been to him a labour of love, and he had been upheld and assisted by a devoted band of men and women whose hearts burned with the love of God and whose aim was the salvation of the young people. After again expressing his thanks for the beautiful portrait, Mr. Rigby said: "Much as I appreciate the gift of this portrait, I feel that I owe such a debt of gratitude to the dear old Sunday school that has done so much for me, I ask the Committee of the Sunday school to accept this portrait from me, and

place it in the school as another token of my love and esteem from the children's friend."

The superintendent minister, the Rev. E. Wright Adcock, accepted the portrait on behalf of the Sunday school Committee, and said how grateful they were for the gift. They prayed that Mr. Rigby's hopes concerning the young folk of Brentnall Street might be abundantly realised.

At the conclusion of the formal proceedings, refreshments, which had been generously provided by Mr. Rigby, were served to the guests, and the social hour afforded the opportunity for old friendships to be renewed. There was many a joyous company in the Armoury that evening, and when, shortly after ten o'clock, members of the Presentation Committee went on the platform and joined hands, preparatory to singing "Auld Lang Syne," there were expressions that the time had passed all too quickly.

The children under fifteen were entertained in the school on the following evening, when there was an entertainment much more to their liking than speech-making. The addresses and portrait were there for exhibition, and many of the young people could scarcely be persuaded not to touch the beautiful work of the illuminator. There was an abundance of tea, milk, and cakes, and afterwards a conjurer mystified the youthful audience and provided plenty of fun with the antics of his ventriloquist's dolls. As the scholars left the school there was an orange for each of them—another gift from Mr. Rigby.

It was a joyous, noisy company which came trooping down the school steps that Friday evening; and if some of those children should live to celebrate *their* Jubilee in connection with the school, they surely will not forget the happy time they spent while celebrating the "Quadruple Jubilee" of 1912.

The Band of Hope celebrated its Jubilee in 1911. On April 17 Mr. William Flitcroft, a former member of the Band of Hope and a most indefatigable worker in

days gone by, entertained the committee and members to a social evening in the large room of the school, when a large company accepted Mr. Flitcroft's hospitality. Councillor Thomas Brown was the chairman. Naturally, on such an occasion, many of the speeches were of a reminiscent character, and the names of those who had been prominent workers when the movement was young were once more heard in a Band of Hope meeting. In a previous chapter the founders of Brentnall Street Band of Hope are mentioned. Coming to the 'eighties we find a large and strong committee, full of eagerness to carry on the work to which they were appointed. In this list one is compelled to notice the names of Mr. T. Welch and Mr. Abraham Horsfall, both ardent temperance advocates and assiduous in their devotion to the interests of the Band of Hope. In Queen Victoria's Jubilee Year Mr. Horsfall was president; Messrs Thomas Welch, Joseph Stretch, Robert Mellor, and Frank Horler, vice-presidents; Mr. William Flitcroft, treasurer; and Mr. William Hague, secretary. The interest manifested by the committee in the work may be gauged by the fact that it was no unusual thing to have twenty-five members present. Mr. Horsfall sustained the office of president for many years, and was most exemplary in the discharge of all the duties attached to the position. Mr. Thomas Rothwell has also rendered distinguished service both as secretary and president, and is still a member of the committee. Mr. Thomas Brandreth was president of the Band of Hope when he was superintendent of the Sunday school, and died while holding the two offices. When in health he rarely missed a meeting. At the time of his presidency Mr. Brandreth possessed a record which none of his fellow-members of the committee held, in that he was in the school when the Band of Hope was established, and contributed towards the initial expense. Mr. Joseph Stretch and Mr. Samuel Rhodes have also served as vice-presidents, and have had a share in guiding the fortunes of the Society.

Mr. Robert Rothwell, who has resided for several years past at St. Helens, was another who served the Society

faithfully as secretary, and was not slow in undertaking extra-official duties if they conduced to the general up-building of the work he had in hand. Mr. Frank Lingard, another secretary, carried on the work inaugurated by his father years before. Those who remember Mr. William Lingard in the old school frequently speak of his great interest in temperance work, and of his undertaking the distribution of literature dealing with the cause. Mr. Samuel Oldham has served a term as secretary, and is now the treasurer. Mr. Arthur Hague, younger brother of Mr. William Hague, held office as secretary for some time, and gave great delight to his fellow-members not only by the amount of work which he undertook, but also by the manner in which he did the work. He was indeed a "brother beloved." Gentle, courteous, and pleasant, his death came as a great shock on July 2, 1905, when he passed away in his twenty-seventh year. Mr. Walter Minshull and Mr. Arnold Williams were co-secretaries, and their tenure of the office will be remembered especially by the young people by reason of the good humour which the last-mentioned secretary infused into the proceedings. The present secretary is Mr. Charles Garrett; and Mr. William Hague is president, a position he has held for some years. Mr. Hague has been most consistent in his devotion to the work of the Band of Hope for a very long time, and is frequently to be found in different parts of the town and district, speaking on behalf of a work which lies very near his heart. Lack of space prevents reference to all those whose names occur in the history of the Band of Hope. The work has been carried on, with varying success, since 1861, and many, very many, of those who saw the beginning of the movement are not here to see its continuance. It has been a work not always recognised by others, often carried on amid discouragements, and frequently inviting much self-sacrifice on the part of those who were responsible for the arranging of programmes and the preparation of addresses. But there cannot be the slightest doubt that, during a period of more than fifty years, many lives have been improved

and many homes made happier through the instrumentality of the Brentnall Street Band of Hope.

The first meeting of the Sunday School Council was held in March, 1912, under the chairmanship of the Rev. E. Wright Adcock, superintendent minister. It has been previously mentioned that the Council took over all the functions formerly discharged by the teachers' meeting and Committee. At this meeting Mr. John Jones was appointed general secretary, Messrs. Thomas Brown and S. J. Oliver school secretaries. At an adjourned meeting, held a month later, the writer of this work, Mr. William Swindells, was appointed superintendent, and for the first time in its history the school was left without visitors. The writer came to the school as a child, and after passing through the various classes as a scholar, was appointed a teacher in 1895. Three years before he had come on the plan as a local preacher, during the superintendency of the Rev. John Baker. He is the son of Mr. Matthew Swindells, grandson of Mr. Thomas Swindells, and great-grandson of Mr. Joseph Mellor, each of whom held the office of visitor at Brentnall Street. The writer has fully realised the responsibilities of the position of superintendent, and prays that Divine blessing may accompany whatever he has been able to do for the young people of the school.

The following is a list of the officers and teachers for 1915:—

Minister:

Rev. G. F. ROSE.

Honorary President:

Mr. SAMUEL RIGBY, J.P.

Superintendent:

Mr. WILLIAM SWINDELLS.

Absentee Visitor: Mr. JOSEPH STRETCH.

Conductor of Music: Mr. MATTHEW SWINDELLS.

Organist: Mr. J. H. HALLWORTH.

Secretaries:

Messrs. S. J. OLIVER and W. A. WILLIAMS.

Treasurer: Mr. D. D. HALLIDAY.

Auditors:

Messrs. H. A. JOHNSTONE and J. R. THOMPSTONE.

President of the Band of Hope:

Mr. WILLIAM HAGUE.

Secretary: Mr. CHARLES GARRETT.

Secretary of the Juvenile Missionary Society:

Mr. RICHARD BARRATT.

TEACHERS:

Boys' Classes—

Mr. Thomas Rothwell
 „ F. Davenport
 „ W. Hague
 „ J. H. Hallworth
 „ J. W. Chappell
 „ S. Oldham
 „ J. R. Jameson
 „ W. Seiles
 „ Joseph Hallworth, Junr.
 „ G. Wigglesworth
 „ W. Minshull
 Miss E. White
 „ A. Dudson
 „ N. Lingard
 „ N. Barrett
 „ D. Thorley

Girls' Classes—

Miss Tildesley
 „ Turner
 „ Rose
 „ Hill
 Mrs. J. H. Hallworth
 Miss Hopkins
 „ Clews
 Mrs. S. J. Oliver
 Miss B. Percival
 „ B. Jackson
 „ Shore
 „ Marsland
 „ M. Wood
 „ D. Rothwell
 „ B. L. Sidebotham

Teacher-training Class: Mr. J. W. WALGATE.

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT:

Miss Ramskill } *Superintendents.*
 „ Jenkins }

Miss E. Harris	Miss E. Swindells
„ M. Yearsley	„ E. Broom
„ M. Riddell	Mr. F. Fairclough
„ D. Leicester	„ N Sykes
„ F. Hammond	„ B. Rothwell
„ E. Morten	

In addition to the foregoing staff the following gentlemen have for several years visited the school when appointed by the superintendent to give addresses in the large room, namely, Messrs. H. A. Johnstone, J.P., John Turner, J.P., J. W. Yearsley, J. L. Ramskill, and James Bell. Such help has been invaluable, and is acknowledged with gratitude.

This undertaking cannot be brought to an end without referring to the awful war which has now devastated Europe for months. When the catastrophe burst upon an astonished people there was little thought of the drain which would come upon the young manhood of this country; nor did Sunday school workers think that in some cases the whole fabric which had been built up through the last century was in danger of falling to pieces through the withdrawal of so many young fellows. At the time of writing the two upper male classes at Brentnall Street have been almost denuded of scholars, many of the most regular attendants and those who had given promise of usefulness having joined the King's forces, and gone forth to battle—in France, Egypt, or Gallipoli. Their teachers and the officers of the school have been greatly cheered from time to time by the letters which have come from the scholar-soldiers, in which they tell of a determination to put into practice the precepts learned in the school, and to set a Christian example to their comrades in the Army. While the school (and every other school) has suffered greatly by the withdrawal of these young men, this loss has been compensated by the knowledge that other lives are being influenced for good by coming into contact with so many Sunday school scholars.

This work must now be brought to a close. It is a record, but by no means a complete record. It is impossible to estimate all the good that has been accomplished in and through the school, for eternity alone will reveal the lives which have been influenced and the characters changed as the result of the faithful work accomplished by the teachers. The superintendent and other officers

have important tasks in organising and unifying the various agencies; but the teachers, in their classes, by striking lesson or quiet individual talk, really make the school *live*. This is why this book cannot be a complete record. The incidents entered in a minute book are details of collective acts; but no secretary sat with ready pen to record the quiet, unostentatious work undertaken Sunday by Sunday when the teacher faced the boys or girls and spoke of the things which really mattered. The names of many teachers are not even mentioned once in this work. That does not mean that their labour has not been recognised. The greatest satisfaction to a teacher is in the knowledge that the scholars have been influenced, and not merely in having an entry made in an official record. All the officers and teachers have had their work to do, and in proportion as that work has been faithfully performed, to the glory of God, so has the school prospered and grown.

May the good work continue!

THE END.

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